



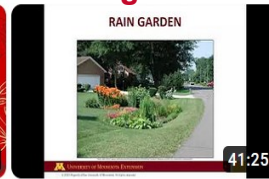
### YouTube Offerings



Home Gardening Webinar  
2023: Pruning Shrubs &...



Home Gardening Webinar  
2023: Pruning Brambles



ISU Dept. of Horticulture  
Seminar: Perennial Grasses...



Home Gardening Webinar  
2023: How to Tame Your...

## Allamakee County Master Gardener Seeds of Wisdom

**Iowa State University  
Extension in Allamakee County**  
218 7th Ave SE Suite #102  
Waukon, IA 52172  
Phone: (563)-568-6345  
[www.extension.iastate.edu/  
allamakee](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/allamakee)

### Upcoming Dates to Remember

Mark your Calendars now with these upcoming events. See page 8 for more information.

- April 27—MG Meeting
- May 13—FFA Plant Sale
- May 19—MG Plant Sale Prep
- May 20—MG/FFA Plant Sale
- June 16-18—Big 4 Fair
- June 22—MG Potluck

“Experimental Dandelion  
Farm. Do not disturb the  
weeds!”

“Flowers only bloom when they  
are ready. People are the same  
way. Blossom at your own pace  
and let others do the  
same.” Anon.

### Allamakee County Master Gardener Meeting

Thursday, April 27, 2023  
Waukon Wellness Center Activity Room  
7:00 p.m.

**Hostesses:** Gayle Bahlmann and Diane Nolting  
**Roll Call:** What are you planning on bringing to the plant sale?  
**Secretary’s Minutes:** published in this newsletter  
**Treasurer’s Report:**

Motions needed for Christmas gifts and scholarship

#### Old Business:

Plant sale on May 13 and May 20

1. Posters to hang in communities

Discussion on jumping worm and bare root perennials

Did anyone go to Mondays in March in Manchester

Gardening in the Driftless report

#### New Business:

Motion to get change for plant sale

Motion to pay FFA for plants sold

**Next Meeting:** Annual potluck, June 22, Phyllis Baker, hostess.

### Plant Sale Flyer - UPDATE!

Make sure any plant sale flyers you post are the updated ones  
with Allamakee County Fairgrounds as the location. Anything with  
Waukon listed as the location should be thrown away.

Thank You!

The gardener doesn’t mind the rain,  
The gardener doesn’t mind the pain.  
And even when the weather’s hot,  
She’d rather work outside than not.  
Even weeding has its pleasure.  
Making room for floral treasures.  
The gardener doesn’t count time lost:  
She only minds an early frost.  
Alma Ruth, American poet 1928

“Flowers are restful to look at. They have neither emotions nor conflicts.” Sigmund Freud

## Master Gardener March Meeting Minutes— Kayla Bjerke

March 4, 2023 Time: 10:00 AM Location: Waukon Wellness Center The meeting was called to order at 10:06 AM by Clara Lensing. 18 members answered the roll call question of “How long have you been gardening”.

The treasurer’s report was given. Additional dues were paid in. There were expenses for copies, postage and boxes along with expenses for reimbursing members for half of the class fees along with a Christmas gift for the Extension Office.

The minutes of the October meeting were approved as printed. The group conversed about the recent symposiums members attended.

Mary Engstrom made a motion to pay Clara Lensing for mileage to the Buchanan Symposium in Independence and was second by Don Haler. The motion was passed with all 18 in favor. A plant sale update was given by the committee. This year there will be half as many tomato seeds planted and planting will start 2 weeks later than in the past. Judy listed the vegetables and varieties to be planted for the 2023 sale.

Judy Egeland presented a bill for seeds. A motion to pay Judy Egeland for seeds purchased for the 2023 plant sale was made by Pat Meeter and seconded by Cici Mueller. Clara put the motion to a vote with 18 ayes and 0 nays. The motion carried. The poster mockup for the plant sale is finalized and ready for copies to be made. Sue Cahoon will get quotes on copy fees from places in Waukon. Judy took down the number of copies anticipated for each town.

There was one applicant for the scholarship from the Allamakee County Master Gardeners. A motion was made by Don Haler to accept the application. The motion was second by Sue Cahoon. The motion carried with 18 aye and 0 nays. There was a short discussion about expanding the scope of the scholarship to encompass other areas that may apply to more graduates. This discussion was tabled to another meeting.

A suggestion was made to set up a few “road trips” to local places of interest. Suggestions of Elon, Val Martin-Steel Cow Lavender Farm and places in the Decorah area were brought up. Don Haler made a motion to adjourn the meeting and Mary Engstrom second. The next meeting is April 27, 2023 at 7:00 PM at the Waukon Wellness Center

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## Master Gardener Profile — Linda Nelson

**Background:** I was born and raised in Decorah, Ia.

I moved to La Crosse in 1980, and lived there until my husband and I moved north of Lansing in 2019.

**Family:** I am married to Jerry for the past 27 years.

I have 2 adult boys that both live in the La Crosse area.

**Current and/or former occupation:** I am a Registered Nurse. Retired from Mayo Health System in La Crosse in 2021 after working there for over 30 years.

I currently have a very part-time/casual on call position at the Spring Grove, MN Assisted Living.

**Favorite gardening activity:** I am really into trying to help the Monarch Butterfly population and am planting a lot of Milkweed, butterfly flowers and wild flowers in my flower beds, ditches and other areas. That’s my focus right now. I’ve even talked my neighbors to start doing it, so that’s a plus!

**Other hobbies:** We have 35 acres of woods and bluff lands with logging roads throughout. I love hiking the woods when it not too wet.

We spend a lot of time cutting grass in the summer. We push mow about 2 acres between my husband and I, so it keeps us very busy.

We do burn wood and are busy with gathering and cutting/splitting wood throughout the year.

**Anything you’d like to share about you:** I like to travel and hope to do more of that this coming year. We have an Alaskan cruise planned for the middle of July. This will be my 3<sup>rd</sup> one. I am looking forward to checking out some new towns along the way.

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“Flowers do not compete with flowers around them. They just bloom.” Unknown

## Clara's Clippings—Clara Lensing

Our next meeting will be April 27, at 7 p.m. at the Wellness Center in Waukon. We will need to make sure that everything is ready for the plant sale. Hostesses are Gayle Bahlmann and Diane Nolting.

Mary Techau sends us her greetings. She has been busy fertilizing her flowers and getting ready to plan cool weather seeds in her raised beds outdoors. The pear trees are ready to bloom, daffodils are about done and the tulips, the ones the deer left her, and budding. Mary has a pair of Canadian geese nesting on the island in the pond keeping them entertained along with some wood ducks. I am jealous!

Thank you Don for arranging our night out at Rossville. You picked a perfect evening for it.

Our next big "adventure" is the plant sale. The seeds have been planted and starting to grow. We should have the advertisements to take with you at the next meeting to hang in our communities.

For the past couple of years, we have been concerned about bringing in unwanted "critters" with the perennials brought to the plant sale. The following regarding the jumping worm is taken from the Iowa Master Gardeners Plant Sale Guideline.

**Special Consideration: Jumping Worms** To minimize the risk of jumping worms, follow the included precautions:

### Do's

- ⇒ Consider selling cuttings in water or bare root. Root washing is appropriate for ornamentals.
- ⇒ Check all potted plants prior to transportation for worm castings or active worms.
- ⇒ Collect and destroy any jumping worms if you see them.
- ⇒ Brush off boots/shoes after being in areas of potential or known contamination.

### Do Not's

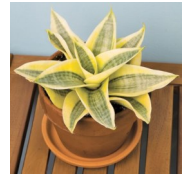
- ⇒ Do not bring in plants from known or suspected infested gardens.
- Do not use compost or potting media that has not been sanitized or solarized.

A weed is a plant that has mastered every survival skill except for learning how to grow in rows. – Doug Larson

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## Thymely Tidbits—Pat Meeter

Repotting two Bird's Nest Sansevieria was a task I finally accomplished this month. It is a houseplant that is quite adaptable. Bright indirect light keeps it happy. It doesn't mind being root bound: requiring repotting only every 2-5 years. The worst thing you can do to a bird's nest is overwater. It. When repotting give them 3-6" of growing room. Use a cactus or succulent mix 50/50 with a good potting mix. When watering, do so from the bottom to avoid water spotting on the leaves. When ready to repot water the day before. Gently remove from the pot the next day and lay on newspapers to see where to divide. Carefully separate the roots and the individual plants will be visible. I was able to get 11 plants from those 2 pots.



The Sansevieria is a native of Southern Europe and parts of Africa. It is a relative of the Agave plant and comes in many varieties. Sometimes it is called Snake plant. Some of the larger varieties are used as textile fibers. Another interesting thing I found while researching sansevierias is that although there are claims that they are one of the best houseplants to clean the air, this is actually a misunderstanding. Scientists are now saying that it is the soil in houseplants, along with activated charcoal which can be used at the bottom of the plant along with good ventilation that positively affects indoor air.

Mints of all kinds are some of the easiest herbs to grow. Start seeds 4-8 weeks before the last frost. Plants will live indoors quite well, if necessary. Place seeds on top of your potting mix and do not cover. Mint seeds need light to germinate and should sprout in 10-15 days. Transplant when at least 2 'true' leaves are showing. Harvest is best in the morning for the most flavor. Mint is so easy to start that I do new ones every year and keep them in pots to avoid their aggressive take over the garden tendencies. For this reason do not compost in the fall, but dispose of in the garbage or burn pile.

"I grow plants for many reasons, to please my soul, to challenge the elements or to challenge my patience, for novelty or for nostalgia, but mostly for the joy in seeing them grow." David Hobson

## Seven Common Vegetables That Should NOT Be Planted Together—Clara Lensing

VEGETABLE	DO NOT PLANT NEXT TO
Carrots	dill (same family and will cross) or turnips
Potatoes	put in a back corner - trouble with everyone cucumbers, melons, squash, turnips, tomatoes, peppers (competes for moisture and nutrients and slows growth of tomatoes and both are susceptible to potato blight)
Asparagus	onions, garlic, and potatoes
Pole beans and peas	peppers, beets (all compete for same resources)
Broccoli and cauliflower	peppers, tomatoes, squash, strawberries (brassicas are heavy feeders and make it hard for other nutrient needing plants to thrive)
Corn	tomatoes (both susceptible to fungal infections. If one gets it, the other will likely too)
Onions, garlic, leeks, shallots	pole beans, peas or near each other (if one gets a pest, the rest are likely too)

### Carbohydrates in Vegetables— Clara Lensing

Most of us, I believe, are health conscious, especially when it comes to preparing food for our families. With a little imagination, our gardens almost look like the vitamin aisle at Wal-Mart. I came across recently an article on the health benefits of the above ground crops in our gardens that was quite interesting.

Health nuts love vegetables grown above ground. Did you know that kale is a “superfood”? It is loaded with vitamins A, K, and B6. It has more vitamin C than an orange and is low-calorie, low in carbohydrates, and high in fiber.

Many of the vegetables grown above ground are low in carbohydrates. Raw spinach has only about 1 gram of carbs per cup along with being a good source of iron, calcium and vitamin K. Broccoli, with about 5 grams of carbs per cup may help reduce osteoarthritis, lower blood sugar and help prevent cancer. Asparagus is another vegetable packed full of health benefits. A spear has .6 gram of carbs per spear along with folate, vitamins, Omega-3 and Omega-6 fatty acids and minerals like iron, copper, and manganese.

But the green vegetables are not the only healthy vegetables from our gardens. Cauliflower is high in fiber and antioxidants and 5 grams of carbs per cup. Many recipes have been developed using cauliflower – pizza crust, potato substitute. Red bell peppers is loaded with B vitamins, vitamins A, C, E, and K along with iron, magnesium, phosphorus, manganese, and potassium and 6 grams of carbs per cup.

Then there is purple – eggplant. It is low in carbs with 5 grams per cup and loaded with antioxidants. It, too, is rich in calcium, phosphorus, potassium, high in fiber and loaded with polyphenols which may help reduce the risk of cancer. There is some evidence that the anthocyanins in eggplant may improve cognitive function.

What about the root vegetables? Are they bad? No way. Radishes are one of the very few “below ground” vegetables low in carbs with 4 grams per cup. Sweet potatoes and carrots are good sources of vitamin A. Most of the root vegetables are high in antioxidants, fiber, minerals, and vitamins. Most root vegetables, however, are high in carbohydrates. The problem here is, eating carbohydrates makes us wanting more carbs, which can lead to other health problems. Another plus with growing our own vegetables, we know exactly how they were grown. And, fresh, is always better. Let’s plant plenty of green, purple, red, and orange vegetables this spring.

“Science has never dreamed up quite as effective a tranquilizing agent as a sunny spring day.” Wilton E. Hall

## COOKS NOOK

### Fresh Carrot Salad—Pat Meeter

1 pound carrots, peeled and shredded...food processor or box grater

Whisk together the following:

2 tsp Dijon mustard

1 Tbsp lemon juice

1 1/2 Tbsp Vegetable oil

1 1/2 Tbsp Olive oil

1-2 tsp honey

1/4 tsp salt

1/4 tsp pepper

Pour over the carrots and add 2 Tbsp fresh chopped parsley and 2 sliced green onions or a handful of sliced chives. Toss gently and refrigerate for a hour or more so carrots absorb the flavors.

This is a colorful salad and different from my grandma's with Mayo and raisins.



### Buchanan County Gardening Symposium—Connie Benedict

Buchanan County Gardening Symposium February 28, 2023 Five Master Gardeners attended this symposium in Independence.. The first talk was by Alex Hoffman, DNR forester, who also gave a talk last year and as it was so well received last year he was asked to speak again this year. His topic was **Climate Change on Trees**. He started by saying there was not a lot of positive things he could tell us in regards to climate change and trees. The frost free growing season has increased by 2 weeks. As temperatures warming up some insects have completed more life cycles in 1 year. Poison ivy increases and more ticks-more lyme disease. He said very important to plant the right tree in the right place and always include diversity in choosing trees. Think native.

Keith Kovarik from K&K gardens gave the second talk. **Landscaping-small areas, sun/shade & use of yard art** He gave us a large list of plants that go in the landscape. The hosta of the year 2023 is Neptune. Cleman-tis "sweet autumn" does not need to grow on a trellis and cut down to 8 inches every spring. Northwind switchgrass doesn't spread-it is clump like. On their website they have great information on the plants that they sell.

Either before or after lunch each person could pick out a session to attend. Two sessions to pick from were **Tips on Starting Vegetables** for your garden by Neal Beck or **Southern and Black ethnic gardening** - Shaffer Ridgeway Southern Goods, Waterloo.

The next session to start off the afternoon was **Pruning Perennial Shrubs and Plants** by Eileen Schmidt (Cedar River Garden Center, Palo) In spring prune lilacs right after they bloom, coneflower and black-eyed susans prune in spring. Fall pruning-daylily, iris, salvia, phlox and peony. Eileen didn't have much time to prepare as the original speaker decided to have a baby 2 weeks early. I thought she looked kind of familiar and yes she was the weather gal on KWWL awhile back.

The last talk was by Josh Spece **-In the Country Garden and Gifts-** Quasqueton Josh is known for growing hundreds of succulents and hosta's. Succulents are better off too dry than too wet. Water thoroughly and don't water again until dry. His website is [info@inthecountrygardenandgifts.com](mailto:info@inthecountrygardenandgifts.com) He is very knowledgeable and happy to answer your questions. One gal in the audience gave a shout out to him and their shop as the most fun ever at a tour. This sounded like a good tour for our group as was Beck's Wapsie Fresh Produce & Greenhouse-Fairbank (Neal Beck).

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Subscribe to the channel to be notified when a new recording is available. <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCoyB28Aj3qOovjpwkSiLBg>

"Wake up each morning with the thought that something wonderful is going to happen."

## How to Revive a Succulent— by Cori Sears submitted by Becky Litterer

There's no worse feeling than going to check up on your beloved succulent only to find that it's dying on you. It can take a while for succulents to show signs of stress which makes a sudden decline appear as if it's coming out of nowhere when in reality it has probably been brewing for a while. Not to worry—as long as your succulent is still showing signs of life, it can be revived.

**When to Revive a Succulent**—Generally, any type of plant care like repotting or pruning should be done in the spring or summer months when the plant is actively growing. However, when it comes to reviving a succulent the best time is whenever you first notice the issue. It can take a while before a succulent begins showing signs of stress so once it finally does it's important to act fast to ensure you save the plant.

**Before Getting Started**—The method for reviving a dying succulent will vary depending on what is causing the problem. Before getting started, it's important to figure out what the main issue is. The most common culprits include overwatering, under watering, leaf burn, and pests.

**How to Revive a Succulent Dying From Overwatering**—Overwatering is the most common reason that succulents die when grown indoors. Succulents are extremely drought-tolerant plants and should be allowed to dry out thoroughly between waterings. A succulent that has been overwatered is susceptible to root rot which can quickly kill the plant. Watch out for signs of overwatering like mushy stems and roots, yellow leaves, and dropping leaves. At the first sign of overwatering, follow these steps to revive your succulent.

**Prune Away Mushy Roots & Stems**—Remove the succulent from its pot and prune away any mushy roots and/or stems using a pair of pruning shears. Don't worry about cutting all the roots off if you need to. The most important part is ensuring that you remove all of the rot as it can spread quickly.

**Prepare a Fresh Pot of Succulent Soil**—Fill a plastic pot or terracotta pot (one that has drainage holes) with succulent or cactus soil. Alternatively, you can use an equal-part mixture of indoor potting soil, sand, and perlite.

**Repot the Succulent**—Whether your succulent has some roots left, or you needed to cut it down to the stem, the next step is to plant it back in fresh, dry soil. However, if your plant doesn't have roots left it is best to allow the cut end of the stem callous over for a few hours before planting it back in the soil.

**Return the Succulent to Its Original Location**—Move the succulent back to its original location and whatever you do, don't water it. Wait to water your plant until the leaves begin to pucker slightly, especially if you potted your plant up without any roots. Just like when you propagate succulent cuttings, roots will begin to grow on their own in the soil, but it's very important to wait to water your plant until roots have developed, otherwise, it will just sit in wet soil and begin to rot again.

**How to Revive a Succulent Dying From Underwatering**—While succulents are known for being drought-tolerant they do still require the occasional watering—they're still plants after all. Chronic under watering can lead to a succulent's roots drying up which then prevents it from absorbing any moisture when it is eventually watered again. The most common way to tell if your succulent is under watered is to check its leaves. If its leaves are looking wrinkled and dried up then you may be dealing with under watering. Ensure that you check the plant's roots to confirm.

**Remove Damaged Foliage and Roots**—Remove the succulent from its pot and cut back any dried or shriveled leaves and roots. If the stem is dried too don't be afraid to cut it back.

**Let the Cutting Callous Over**—Allow the succulent to sit in a dry location (out of the soil) for a few hours so that the cut ends can callous over.

**Place the Succulent in Water**—To help rehydrate the succulent and encourage it to grow new roots, place the succulent in a small container filled with water. The leaves should sit above the surface while the bottom of the stem and any remaining roots should be below the water. If needed, remove some of the lowest leaves to prevent them from being submerged. Place the container in a location that gets bright, indirect light.

**Repot in Fresh Soil**—After a few weeks, the succulent should have some roots established. If so, you can replant the succulent in a pot with fresh succulent soil. Alternatively, you can use an equal parts mixture of indoor potting soil, perlite, and sand. Water it well after repotting, allowing the excess water to drain from the pot.

**How to Revive a Succulent Dying From Leaf Burn**—Some succulents enjoy lots of bright, direct sunlight while others enjoy more mild conditions. Either way, all succulents are susceptible to leaf burn if the conditions are right. If your succulent has large brown, crispy spots on its leaves then this is an indication that your plant is suffering from leaf burn—sunburn for plants. This can happen if a succulent is exposed to more light than it needs, or if there is a sudden change in its lighting conditions (moving from indoors to outdoors for example) without adequate acclimation.

**Remove Affected Foliage**—Using a pair of pruning shears, remove any foliage that has been burned. This is mainly for aesthetic purposes as the burns cannot be fixed, but it also ensures that no bacteria is introduced to your plant via the burns. This may leave your succulent looking a bit scarce but don't worry, it will sprout new growth.

**Find a New Location for the Succulent**—To prevent further leaf burn ensure that you move the succulent to a new location with less light. If you would like to move a succulent to a brighter location in the future, ensure that you properly acclimate the plant so it does not get leaf burn again.

**How to Revive a Succulent Dying From Pests**—Pests are every plant parent's worst nightmare. Not only is the thought of your houseplants being infested with pests gross, but getting rid of them can be difficult and often requires a lot of persistence. If your succulent is suffering from pests you may see the insects crawling on or flying

## How to Revive a Succulent— by Cori Sears submitted by Becky Litterer continued from Page 6

You may also see some discoloration on the leaves, or a sticky residue left on the leaves and stems. While the exact course of action for removing pests may vary slightly depending on what type of pest you're dealing with, these general steps are a good guideline.

**Isolate the Succulent**—First things first, the infested succulent should be isolated away from any other succulents or plants in your house to prevent the pests from spreading. Ensure you move it somewhere with adequate light—it will likely need to stay isolated for at least a few weeks.

**Remove Badly Damaged Foliage**—Using a pair of pruning shears, remove any leaves or branches that have been badly damaged by pests. If there are areas of the plant that are particularly badly infested you can also just remove those entirely at this time rather than attempting to treat them.

**Spray Down the Plant and Treat**—Move your succulent to the sink or shower and spray it down to remove as many remaining pests as you can. Then apply the correct insecticide/treatment for the type of pest you are dealing with.

**Repeat**

Unfortunately, one round of treatment usually isn't enough for most pest so you will likely need to repeat the process a couple of times over the following weeks to ensure your plant is cured.

Taken from <https://www.thespruce.com/how-to-revive-a-succulent->

Till next time this is Becky Litterer, Becky's Greenhouse, Dougherty Iowa

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## Plant Description Posters for our Plant Sale—Caroll Schreiber

The Plant Sale Committee has purchased seeds to grow the following for our sale:

17 varieties of tomatoes (slicers, large, medium, small, paste, grape and patio).

7 varieties of peppers (sweet bell, chili and hot).

5 varieties of cabbage, 2 varieties of eggplant, kohlrabi and broccoli.

1 variety of swiss chard, cauliflower, celery, basil, thyme, parsley, marjoram, sage and rosemary.

We are planning to make 8 1/2" X 11" posters for every variety. If you are planning to bring vegetables, flowers, bulbs, houseplants, perennials and/or something else from your gardens and would like a poster describing your items, please let me know so a poster can be made for your addition(s) to our sale. The kind of information we would need about your item(s) for example is: name, heirloom or hybrid, type, color, size, height, etc. or anything special you would like added. Try to get the information to me before April 27. The sooner the better.

Please send your information to: Caroll Schreiber, email: [tcschreiber@gmail.com](mailto:tcschreiber@gmail.com) or phone or text: 563-794-0000. I am looking forward to hearing from you.

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## Master Gardener Plant Sale — Gayle Bahlmann

MASTER GARDENER PLANT SALE MAY 20, 2023 from 8:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. at the 4-H building @ the Al-lamakee County Fairgrounds.

A committee of 5 (Clara Lensing, Caroll Schreiber, Judy Egeland, Gayle Bahlmann, Joe Swizdor) have met twice to order seeds and plan for the plant sale.

- o Susan Cahoon (chairman) signed up for advertising and Mary Engstrom (co-chairman) with Joe Swizdor will be working with Susan.
  - o Karen Boot (chairman) has signed up for setup on Friday, May 19 and working the floor on Saturday, May 20.
  - o Phyllis Baker (chairman) will help clean the building on Friday, May 19 and cleanup after the sale on Saturday, May 20. The key needs to be picked up from the ISU Extension Office and returned after the sale.
  - o Caroll Schreiber and Jessica O'Connor are making all plant posters.
- Judy Egeland (chairman) will be asking for master gardeners to plant seeds at the high school green house. We will need lots of helpers to work both days. Signup sheets will be available at the March 4 and April 27 meetings. If you will not be at a meeting, call Gayle @ 563-568-0050 or email: [ggbahl@gmail.com](mailto:ggbahl@gmail.com) to sign up. Startup time on Friday, May 19 will be @ 9:00 a.m. and finish when the work is done. All Plants grown by Master Gardeners should be brought in that day. No woody plants can be brought in. Saturday, May 20 start time for the first workers should be 7:00 a.m.

“You are only given a little spark of madness. You musn't lose it.”

## **Yard and Garden: Prepare Your Garden Tools for Spring— by Aaron J. Steil**

With spring around the corner, now is the time to clean up the garden shed and prepare tools and supplies for the gardening season. In this article, horticulturists with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach offer information on how to clean, sanitize, sharpen and prepare your garden tools for spring.

How do I clean and sanitize plant containers for reuse? Reusing plastic, clay and other containers is a great way to save money and reduce plastic waste going into landfills. Plastic plant containers cannot be recycled in traditional single-stream home recycling programs and, unfortunately, programs to collect and recycle plastic plant containers are not common. It is important to clean and disinfect old pots each time you use them. Disease-causing fungi and other organisms, including insects, can remain in old containers and infect the new plants potted in them.

To disinfect the pots, use a stiff brush or rag to remove all the loose soil particles. Soak the container in a solution containing one part household bleach to nine parts water for a minimum of 10 minutes. Then wash pots in soapy water (dish detergent works great) and rinse clean.

Mineral deposits can frequently form around the upper inside rim of the pot near the soil line. Remove this mineral deposit from pots with a scouring pad. Tough-to-remove deposits can be scraped away with a knife. Smooth any rough edges with steel wool. Rinse the pot and it is ready for reuse.

How do I sanitize my pruners to prevent the spread of some diseases? Proper cleaning and sanitization of pruners and other garden tools is important to prevent the spread of disease issues. At minimum, when removing disease-infected plant material, pruners should be disinfected between plants. Ideally, pruners should be disinfected between each cut.

Always start by removing dirt, sap and other debris from pruning equipment before disinfecting.

A 10% solution of household chlorine bleach prepared by adding 1 part bleach to 9 parts water can be used for disinfecting pruning blades. The solution should be used within two hours of mixing, and the tool should be soaked for at least 10 minutes in the sun.

One of the easiest ways to sanitize pruning equipment is to use ethanol or isopropyl alcohol. To sanitize with alcohol, wipe or dip the tool into the alcohol. No prolonged soaking is needed. Rubbing alcohol (70% isopropyl alcohol) and ethanol can be readily purchased from most drug stores and other retail outlets and can be used directly from the container with no dilution necessary. Disinfecting with alcohol is preferred for homeowners to most other methods because it is easy to use, easy to find in stores, relatively inexpensive and does not require prolonged soaking.

How do I clean and prepare my garden tools? Proper care of garden tools and equipment prolongs their life, prevents costly repairs and improves their performance. Remove caked-on soil from shovels, spades, hoes and rakes with a wire brush or stiff putty knife. Wash the tools with a strong stream of water, then dry. Wipe the metal surfaces with an oily rag or spray with WD-40 to help prevent corrosion. Sand rough wooden handles, then wipe with linseed oil to prevent drying and cracking.

Over time, cultivation tools like hoes, shovels and spades get nicked and damaged by stones and soil. Sharpening the blades of cultivation tools will make them easier and safer to use. To sharpen cultivation tools, start by securing the tool by the handle in a bench vise with the front side facing up. Using a metal file, sharpen the edge by pushing the file away from you across the blade. Hold the file at the same angle during the entire process, using the existing beveled angle at the tool's edge as a guide. Work slowly and evenly so that a shine appears about one-quarter-inch back from the blade's edge along the entire edge. Then turn the tool over and remove any burrs from the underside of the blade edge by lightly pushing the metal file away from you with the same smooth and even motion as before. Depending on the amount of use, most cultivation tools only need sharpening once a year.

How do I prepare my lawn mower for spring? Spring is the best time to service the engine and sharpen the blades to ensure the mower runs smoothly and cleanly cuts the lawn. Start by checking the oil. Some mowers benefit from changing the oil once a year. Others only require the oil to be topped off in the spring. Check your owner's manual and follow those instructions to check or change the oil. Check all filters, including the air, oil and fuel filters, and clean or replace them as needed. Ideally, the fuel tank was drained or run dry in the fall, but if it wasn't, it is important to remove the old fuel and replace it with new before starting up the mower for the first time in spring. Check and replace the spark plug every one to three years. A fresh spark plug will allow the engine to run better and start up easier.

Take the opportunity to sharpen the blades and clean the mower deck while the fuel tank is empty. Dull mower blades make the engine work harder and tear or rip grass blades rather than cleanly slicing them. The ragged edge of a grass leaf cut with a dull mower blade will turn brown and allow some disease pathogens to infect the leaf more easily. To remove the blade, wear heavy leather gloves, disconnect the spark plug (or remove the battery on an electric mower), and jam in a short 2x4 to keep the blade from turning. Loosen the bolt at the center of the blade using a socket wrench. It may take some leverage to get it loose! Once removed, you can sharpen the blades yourself or take them to a hardware store or outdoor equipment retailer for sharpening. While the blade is out, this is also the perfect time to clean the mower deck. Use a strong stream of water and a putty knife to remove built-up debris from the underside of the deck and wash or blow leaves and grass from all the other areas of the mower.

**“I’m a great believer in luck, and I find the harder I work the more I have of it.” Thomas Jefferson**



Please join us on the second Tuesday of the month at Jet's Café at 10:30 for an informal gathering.

Tuesday, April 11	Monthly informal gathering	Jet's Café
Thursday, April 27	MG meeting at 7 p.m.	Wellness Center
Saturday, May 13	FFA Plant Sale	Waukon HS Greenhouse
Tuesday, May 9	Monthly informal gathering	Jet's Café
Saturday, May 20	MG/FFA plant sale	Allamakee County Fairgrounds
Tuesday, June 13	Monthly informal gathering	Jet's Café
June 16-18	Big 4 Fair	Postville
Thursday, June 22	MG potluck w/spouse @ 6:00 p.m.	Phyllis Baker, hostess
Tuesday, July 11	Monthly informal gathering	Jet's Café
Saturday, July 15	Clean open class exhibit building	Allamakee County Fairgrounds
July 19-23	Allamakee County Fair	Waukon
Tuesday, August 8	Monthly informal gathering	Jet's Café
Thursday, August 24	MG meeting 7 p.m. (Plant swap?)	Wellness Center
Tuesday, September 12	Monthly informal gathering	Jet's Café
Tuesday, October 10	Monthly informal gathering	Jet's Café
Saturday, October 28	MG meeting 10 a.m.	Wellness Center
Tuesday, November 14	Monthly informal gathering	Jet's Café
Tuesday, December 12	Monthly informal gathering	Jet's Café
Tuesday, January 9	Monthly informal gathering	Jet's Café
Tuesday, February 13	Monthly informal gathering	Jet's Café
Saturday, February 17	MG meeting 10 a.m.	Wellness Center

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### **Fletchers Fun Facts**

1. There are over 17,500 recorded butterfly species in the whole world. Out of this number, 750 can be found in America.
  2. Butterflies belong to the Lepidoptera class of insects which are characterized by their large scaly wings.
  3. The Cabbage White specie of butterfly is the most commonly found in the US. While they are called Cabbage White, they are characterized by their two black markings at the top of their wings.
  4. Monarch butterflies migrate to escape from the cold, not to procreate contrarily to popular belief.
  5. Monarch butterflies are the only insect in the whole world that travels over 2,500 miles on average every winter.
  6. Butterflies don't taste with taste buds, but rather sensors located under their feet.
  7. A group of butterflies is known as a flutter.
  8. Butterflies can see beyond the ultraviolet spectrum and their eyes consist of a network of 6000 lenses.
  9. Did you know that many adult butterflies do not excrete waste at all? As a matter of fact, many adult butterflies use everything they eat as energy.
  10. Contrarily to popular perception, the wings of butterflies are totally clear and the colors we see are the effect of light reflecting on the tiny scales covering them.
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### **Master Gardener Hours**

Are you keeping track of your volunteer service hours? How about your continuing education hours? Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Master Gardener program has updated the website to make logging your hours even easier.

Sign in to the Volunteer Reporting System here <https://mastergardenerhours.hort.iastate.edu/> to log your hours.

The Master Gardener program encourages you to complete 10 hours of continuing education hours and 20 volunteer hours. Didn't get them all in? That's ok, report your hours anyway!

Don't wait until December to report your Master Gardener volunteer and continuing education hours for the year. Record them now so that it doesn't become a huge task at the end of the year. We know that you are doing great things as Master Gardener volunteers. Let us know about them!

Paper copy of the reporting form can be found here <https://mastergardenerhours.hort.iastate.edu/>  
Always remember ~ have fun in the garden!

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