



Allamakee County Master Gardener Seeds of Wisdom

ISU Extension in Allamakee County

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Allamakee County Master Gardeners Outing

SAVE THE DATE!
Master Gardeners Annually Supper will be March 23, 2023 at the Old Rossville Store meet at 5:00 pm, eat at 5:30 pm.
Thank you

Sign Up for Horticulture and Home Pest News

Want to stay updated on the most current news from Horticulture Extension? Sign up for Horticulture and Home Pest News. You'll get regular articles from ISU Extension experts about timely topics delivered right to your inbox.
<https://hortnews.extension.iastate.edu/issue/october-14-2022>

Upcoming Dates to Remember

Mark your Calendars now with these upcoming events.

- Dec. 14—Plant Sale Committee Meeting
- Dec. 31—MG hours due online
- Dec. 23-27—Extension Office Closed
- Dec. 30-Jan.2—Extension Office Closed
- Feb. 3—Newsletter Submission Deadline
- Feb. 25—MG Meeting
- March 23—MG Supper

Thank You to the Allamakee Master Gardeners for the Gift Certificate and the meat and cheese tray from WW Homestead Dairy.
- Allamakee County Extension Office Staff

"Kindness is like snow...it beautifies everything it covers."
-Khalil Gabran

2023 Home Gardening Webinar Series

We are excited to announce the schedule for the 2023 Home Gardening Webinar Series! The themes for this year's series are edibles, pruning, and water usage.

To register for a webinar, visit our website and click on the webinar title you are interested in attending. Once you complete the Zoom registration, you will be emailed connection details.

All ages and backgrounds are welcome to attend these free, public webinars. Webinar space is limited to the first 500 participants.

Website for more information
<https://www.extension.iastate.edu/mastergardener/webinar-series>

Topics include;

January 3, 7p.m.: Growing Crops in the Cold with Dan Fillius (ISU Extension & Outreach)
January 10, 7p.m.: Microgreens with Esther McGinnis (NDSU)
January 17, 7 p.m.: Harvesting and Preserving Herbs with Bruce Black (U of I)

January 24, 7 p.m.: Edible Landscaping with Cindy Haynes (ISU Extension & Outreach)
February 2, 7 p.m.: Shade Tree Pruning – Make it a Habit with Jeff Iles (ISU Extension & Outreach) and Conifer Care for Iowa's Landscapes & Windbreaks with Billy Beck (ISU Extension & Outreach)
February 9, 7 p.m.: How to Tame Your Unruly Apple Tree with Winter Pruning with Suzanne Slack (ISU Extension & Outreach)
February 16, 7 p.m.: Pruning Brambles with Gail Nonnecke .
February 23, 7 p.m.: Pruning Shrubs & Vines with Aaron Steil (ISU Extension & Outreach)
March 1, 6 p.m.: Cassian Schmidt Style Gravel Gardens – A New Effort in Sustainable Gardening with Ed Lyon (Reiman Gardens)
March 8, 6 p.m.: Rain Gardens & Rain Barrels with Jennifer Welch (PCSWCD) and Cassie Druhl (PCPW)

"I left Santa a gluten-free cookie and organic soy milk and he put a solar panel in my stocking." Unknown

October 29, 2022 Meeting Minutes

October 29, 2022 Time: 10:00 AM

Location: Waukon Wellness Center

The meeting was called to order at 10:08 AM by Carol Goettler.

Joe Swizdor was present at the meeting. He has finished his master gardener training classes and is preparing to take the test.

Roll call was "What is your favorite Thanksgiving food?" and 11 (plus Joe) answered.

Minutes of the August meeting were reviewed and approved as printed.

Caroll Schreiber gave the treasurer's report. We had dues for the year as income. Expenses were a donation to Waukon FFA for the use of their greenhouse, a donation to Veterans Memorial Hospital Foundation for the Christmas Tree fantasy and plant sale expenses.

Susan Cahoon has fulfilled all of the Master Gardener requirements. A motion to reimburse half of the Master Gardener Training fee to Susan Cahoon was made by Judy Egeland and second by Don Haler. The motion carried 11 ayes and 0 nays. Susan received her name tag, certificate and pin at the meeting.

Rebecca Manning has fulfilled all of the Master Gardener requirements. A motion to reimburse half of the Master Gardener Training fee to Rebecca Manning was made by Judy Egeland and second by Connie Benedict. The motion carried 11 ayes and 0 nays.

A discussion was held about whether or not to have the plant sale next year. Susan Cahoon made a motion to create a committee to structure the plant sale for the upcoming year. Caroll Schreiber seconded the motion. The committee is Gayle Bahlman, Caroll Schreiber, Judy Egeland, Clara Lensing, and Joe Swizdor. This committee will list out the tasks for the plant sale and who is responsible for each task.

Sallie Driscoll, Karen Boot and Connie Benedict received certificates for 10 years of membership to the Allamakee Master Gardeners. Don Haler was presented a certificate for service above and beyond for the Waukon Farmers Market.

The meeting was adjourned. The next meeting will be February 25, 2023 at 10:00 AM at the Waukon Wellness Center.

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. Want to know more? Check out the six how-to videos found here <https://mastergardenerhours.hort.iastate.edu/videos/>.

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

A couple pro tips: Use Chrome or Safari as your internet browser; Your username is probably your e-mail address.

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!

IF you want Lana to enter in your volunteer or continuing education hours; forms will need to be turned into the office or emailed dahlstro@iastate.edu by December 15, 2022 to be counted for this year. 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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"Christmas is the season for kindling the fire of hospitality." Washington Irving

Clara's Clippings—Clara Lensing

As we are counting down the days of 2022 and looking forward to 2023, the seed catalogs having been arriving. It is fun to look through them and see what is new for the next growing season and pick new ones to try.

On November 30, Judy, Joe, Carroll, Gayle, and I met to work on the number and varieties of vegetables that the Master Gardeners would plant for the plant sale. There are approximately 15 different tomato varieties, 11 different cole crops, and 7 different pepper varieties that would be started at the Waukon High School FFA greenhouse. We would like to know by December 13, what vegetable plants you would like to start for the sale in your home and the duty you would be helping with. Example - advertising, moving plants, etc. Please let me know by December 13. We will be meeting again on December 14.

Remember to record your 2022 volunteer and education hours via the Volunteer Report System. Associates need to send their hours to Lana to be recorded.

Looking to get a start on your education hours for 2023? Iowa State's 2023 Home Gardening Webinar Series starts January 3. Themes this year are edibles, pruning, and water usage. It is necessary to register, as the number participating is limited. Check Lana's e-mail on December 2 or the December issue of *Iowa Master Gardener News & Views* for more information.

Another opportunity for education hours is the 2023 Garden & Landscape Expo in Madison on February 10-12. The full educational schedule and advance ticket sales will be available at wigardenexpo.com beginning December 15.

Buchanan County Master Gardeners will host the Buchanan County Garden Symposium on February 25, 2023. It is from 8:30 AM-3:30 PM at the First Presbyterian Church in Independence. More information to come.

Due to the Buchanan County Garden Symposium, our February meeting will be held on **Saturday, March 4, 2023**, at the Waukon Wellness Center at 10 AM. Please make note of this change.

At our next meeting, March 4, we will pass around a sign-up sheet for hosting the 2023 meetings. Please check and/or bring your calendars as to which month to host. Dates for 2023 are: April 27, June 22 (picnic), August 24, October 28 (Saturday), and March 2 (Saturday). (March 2 because I am assuming that the Buchanan County Garden Symposium will be the last Saturday in February again.)

Thymely Tidbits—Pat Meeter

One of my favorite Christmas cookies is Thumbprints. I think part of the reason is that mom made them every year. Being the oldest of five, I was frequently chosen to help. Usually baking was my mom's quiet time alone, but Thumbprints involve several steps, so that might have influenced her. My first task involved cutting all the red and green candied cherries in half. The cherries are quite sticky, so the job also involved washing the kitchen shear blades frequently under hot water. I don't recall her ever using jelly or tinted frosting to fill the prints and being quite frugal she tripled the batch to be sure all the cherries found a home.

My next job was to chop the pecans. We had a rounded jar with a built in chopper blade and a knob at the top with a spring involved. I can see light bulbs going off and some of you saying, "We had one of those or that's what that thing is I saw in the antique store." The goal was to get the pecan pieces relatively the same size which sometimes meant lining up the blades and perhaps making a game out of the chore.

Next on the list was to form balls approximately the size of a walnut. I still keep a walnut in a kitchen drawer as many cookies are that size and a walnut is a great visual tool to help grandchildren understand cookie language. Now comes the icky part. The thumbprint balls needed to be rolled in a slightly beaten egg white and then into the crushed nuts. Who would want to lick their fingers covered in egg white and nuts? Not me. After a clean-up, we would press a half of a red or green candied cherry into each ball creating the thumbprint. Too far in and the cookie shape would be off and it could burn. Not far enough and the dough in the middle could still be raw. When the cookies were baked and cooled we would fill several paper plates wrapped in plastic wrap and tied with a bow for delivery to friends and neighbors. There were probably an assortment of other kinds of cookies on those plates, but my job was the thumbprints so that's what I remember most. When all this was accomplished and the dishes washed up, my mom and I would have a cup of tea and enjoy one of the best Christmas cookies ever.

"The worst gift is a fruitcake. There is only one fruitcake in the world and people keep sending it to each other." Johnny Carson

The Holly— submitted by MaryKay Winke

I was married in December and had an aunt and uncle who lived in Oregon send holly for us to use to decorate the church along with evergreens and poinsettias. Little did I know of all of its symbolism. This article came from my sister, Becky. Mary Kay

The holly is best known as an evergreen shrub with red berries that appear later in the growing season. It's branches have long been used in holiday decorations like wreaths and centerpieces.

The Holly

Hollies are member of the Aquifoliaceae family, and specifically the genus Ilex. There are more than 400 species that in addition to shrubs, also include trees that can grow more than 50 feet tall. Many species have glossy green leaves that have spiny teeth or serrated edges.

Native to North America, China, Japan, Europe, and North Africa, the holly is one of the few bright spots found around outdoors during winter in cold climates.

Hollies are dioecious, which means that you will need a male and female plant to grow the recognizable red berries, which can also appear as white, yellow, black, and pink. Only the female varieties produce berries.

Holly Meanings and Symbolism

In Christianity, the holly's spiky leaves have long been a representation of the crown of thorns, placed on the head of Jesus at his crucifixion. The red berries are symbolic of his blood.

It was customary for the ancient Romans to give holly during Saturnalia, a harvest festival held around the winter solstice. Those who received it would hang the holly in their home to protect against evil spirits.

In Great Britain, the druids would decorate their homes with holly at the winter solstice. It was thought to symbolize the renewal of life and light.

Pagans and Celts associated holly with the Holly King, who was said to rule Earth between the summer and winter solstices.

Some believed that the holly symbolized hope, wealth, and fertility. More recently, it has represented happiness and peace.

Because of its spiky leaves, holly was also viewed as a symbol of combativeness, pain, and trickery. Others, though, saw the plant as a representation of protection and defense.

It was thought that planting holly next to your house would ward off evil spirits and protect against lightning strikes.

Holly in History

The holly plant has long been a mainstay in decor for the Christmas season.

In the 1800's, it is said that Scotland's Duke of Argyll had a new road rerouted to avoid cutting down an old holly tree.

In 1939, American holly was named the state tree of Delaware.

Holly wood is used to make chess boards and pieces. Whips for horses used for ploughing or coaches were also made from holly wood.

American holly and English holly are the two species most often used for holiday décor.

Holly in the Garden

Best planted during the spring and fall, hollies do best planted in full sun in well-draining and slightly acidic soil.

The shrub varieties are perfect as hedges, perennial borders, or foundation plantings. Larger growing varieties can be pruned in the late fall or early spring to maintain a specific size.

The plant provides an important winter food source for many birds who remain in colder climates when other options have faded with the growing season. However, it is poisonous to humans and many other animals.

Taken from <https://www.almanac.com/content/december-birth-flowers>

All Things Amaryllis— by Becky Litterer

Although amaryllis can be purchased at any stage of development, for many, the real fun is growing the flower from a bulb. Amaryllis bloom about 8 to 10 weeks after planting. These big bulbs are easy to bring into bloom and even a novice can expect success.

About Amaryllis -Like daffodils or tulips, the amaryllis plant starts out as a bulb—often sold as part of a kit containing the bulb, a heavy pot, and some growing medium (ideally, a sterile, soilless planting mix). They are naturally a spring-blooming bulb, producing flowers at some point between late winter and mid-spring (February to April in the Northern Hemisphere). However, amaryllis are commonly forced to bloom earlier in winter, in time for the winter holidays.

After the flowers die back, the plant's large leaves soak up sunlight for the rest of spring and summer, providing them with the energy they'll need to bloom again in the following spring. With the arrival of autumn, the leaves die back and the bulb goes dormant until later winter, when the blooming process is begun anew.

Amaryllis... or Not? Historically, there has been some confusion regarding the name of this plant. Most amaryllis varieties grown today are hybrids and are not "true amaryllis"; they are instead part of the genus *Hippeastrum*, which are native to tropical parts of South America, from Brazil into the Andes. The true amaryllis—members of the genus *Amaryllis*—are native to South Africa and are also known as belladonna lilies (despite not being true lilies). That being said, both *Hippeastrum* and *Amaryllis* are part of the amaryllis family, so they are all amaryllis in some sense!

The name "amaryllis" comes from the Greek word *amarysso*, which means "to sparkle."

PLANTING—Buying Amaryllis Bulbs; When shopping for amaryllis bulbs, you can buy the boxed kits that contain a bulb, a pot, and some soil. These make a nice gift, though there are usually not a lot of color choices—generally they offer red, pink, and white. The flowers are usually the smaller variety though they should bloom just fine if you follow directions.

Some garden centers offer larger bare bulbs that give you more choice of variety and larger sizes, and each one usually produces 2 or more flower spikes. Each spike will produce 2 to 4 large, trumpet-shaped blossoms.

Amaryllis bulbs are classified by size, which is determined by measuring around the outside of the bulb at its widest point. Generally, the larger the bulb, the more flowers the plant is capable of producing.

Another good reason for choosing a bare bulb is that you can see the condition of the bulb without having to rummage around in a box. Make sure it is heavy and firm—not moldy, squishy, or injured. It should have some fairly long fleshy roots attached, too.

How to Plant Amaryllis Bulbs—If you can't put the bulb in a pot right away, store it in a cool, dry, dark place until you can. Amaryllis bulbs may not bloom if they are in too large a pot. There should be no more than 1 inch of space on each side of the bulb and 1/3 of the bulb should be above the soil line. They prefer to be a bit cramped (pot-bound).

Use well-draining potting soil.

Before planting, soak the bulb's roots in lukewarm water for a few hours to rehydrate them.

Put a layer of soil in the bottom of the pot and position the bulb so the top sticks up above the rim of the pot. Firm the soil around the edge, leaving the top third of the bulb exposed. If planted too deeply, the bulb may rot.

Place the pot in a bright spot and water, but be wary of overwatering. Allow the soil to dry a bit between waterings.

Expect beautiful, lily-like blooms in 6 to 8 weeks. Tip: For a continuous display, start a few bulbs at 2-week intervals. As one finishes blooming, the next will be reaching its peak.

GROWING—How to Care for Amaryllis Bulbs; Display the amaryllis away from drafts in a bright room, but not in direct sunlight. Amaryllis prefer temperatures in the range of 60° to 70°F (15.5° to 21°C). Keep them away from freezing windows and drying radiators. Water sparingly. Only water when the top inch of potting mix is dry, taking care not to get water on the neck of the bulb. To promote blooming, use a houseplant fertilizer with high phosphorus content.

When the flower stalk appears, move the amaryllis into brighter sunlight. Turn the pot every several days for even lighting and to prevent leaning.

If the stalk starts to lean, insert a stake next to it, taking care not to disturb the bulb. Amaryllis tend to be top heavy, so stake proactively. Once your amaryllis is blooming, you can move it to a cooler location out of direct sunlight to make the blossoms last longer.

After the flowers have faded, cut them off to prevent seed formation. Cut the stem off at the top of the bulb.

Grow the amaryllis as a foliage plant through the spring and summer until the leaves turn yellow. Then store the potted bulb on its side in a cool, dark room or basement to rest for 8 to 10 weeks. See more "post-bloom" tips below.

How to Care for Amaryllis After Flowering—One of the most frequently asked questions after the holidays is, "Now that my amaryllis has finished flowering, how can I get it to bloom again?" Yes, those bulbs can take center stage again next Christmas if given proper care.

After blossoming, the bulb needs to grow and store food for next season's bloom. Often, the bulbs actually shrink in size from the stress of blooming and will need time to recover lost nutrients.

Once the blossoms have faded, cut off the flower stalk, but keep the leaves growing by placing the pot in a warm, sunny spot. Water regularly and fertilize weekly with a balanced houseplant fertilizer. This is when next year's buds are formed within the bulb.

It takes a minimum of four leaves to produce one flower stalk, because the buds form in the axils of every fourth bulb scale. Keep the plant growing all summer long; you can even move it outside for the summer. Bring it in at the end of August and cut OFF the watering. Let it dry out to induce a period of dormancy. Put the pot in a cool (around 50°F), dark place. Pull off any dried up leaves.

To induce flowering in time for Christmas, bring the plant into a warm, sunny location and resume watering around in early to mid-November. We would recommend repotting it at this time to give the bulb better soil. Or, if you don't feel like it, just scrape off the top 2 inches or so of loose soil and replace it with fresh soil. In about 6 to 8 weeks, the amaryllis should be in full bloom again.

COOKS NOOK

Rommegrot—Clara Lensing

½ gal. whole milk – heat milk until almost to boil, stir constantly.

Melt 2 sticks butter and 1 cup + 1 tablespoon flour, set aside while milk is heating.

Add butter and flour mixture to milk when hot. Add in 1 cup sugar while using hand mixer to keep smooth or creamy. Blend good – pour in casserole dish and heat in oven at 325° for about 45 minutes or put in crock pot.

No Bake Reindeer Poop—Clara Lensing

4 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 (5-ounce) bag mini marshmallows
¼ teaspoon salt
1 (12-ounce) jar caramel ice cream topping
12 ounces semi-sweet chocolate chips
4 cups crispy rice cereal
1 cup M&M's candies

In a 3-quart saucepan, melt the butter over medium-low heat. Add the mini marshmallows and salt and stir until completely melted and well combined.

Remove the saucepan from the heat. Add the caramel sauce, stirring until the mixture is smooth. Add the chocolate chips and continue stirring until the chocolate has melted. Mix in the crispy rice cereal, being sure everything is well coated. Add the M&M's and mix until evenly distributed.

Cranberry Clusters—Mary Kay Winke

2 cups (12 ounces) semisweet chocolate chips
⅔ cup dried cranberries
⅔ cup cashews

In a microwave or saucepan, melt the chocolate chips...stir in the cranberries and cashews. Drop by teaspoonful on waxed paper-lined baking sheets. About 2 dozen.

Can also use white chocolate in place of semisweet and replace the cashews with macadamia nuts.

Thumbprint Cookies—Pat Meeter

A single recipe makes 2-3 dozen
½ cup shortening...part butter and part margarine
¼ cup packed brown sugar
½ tsp vanilla
1 egg separated
1 cup flour
¼ tsp salt
¾ cup finely chopped nuts

Jelly, tinted frosting or candied cherries halved

Heat oven to 350. Mix shortening, sugar, egg yolk and vanilla. Blend flour and salt and stir into sugar mixture. Roll dough into small balls. Dip into slightly beaten egg white then roll in nuts. Place about an inch apart and press cherry gently into top of dough or leave empty to fill with your choice of jelly or frosting. Bake 10-12 minutes or until set. Cool, then fill if not using cherries.

Lefsa—Judy Egeland

In a large mixing bowl add 8 cups riced Russet potatoes (do not pack in cups) and add while they are hot-½ cup butter, 1 Tablespoon salt, ½ cup whipping cream.

When cool add 4 cups flour.

Roll out walnut size ball thin enough to almost see through. Depending how good you are you may want a larger or smaller ball to roll.

Fry on a lefsa griddle (no oil) at about 500 degrees.

Butter and sprinkle with brown sugar--enjoy.

“Mother Nature has the best box of crayons.” Anonymous

Master Gardener Contact List

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