



Allamakee County Master Gardener Seeds of Wisdom

Iowa State University Extension — August 2020

Allamakee County Master Gardener Meeting

Thursday, August 27, 2020

Waukon City Park, Sweeney Shelter at 6:30 p.m.
Plant Swap

Host & Hostess: There will be no food or drink provided. You may bring your own beverage and lawn chair.

Roll Call: What's happening in your garden?

Secretary Minutes: Published in the April newsletter

Treasurer's Report:

Old Business:

New Business: 2021 plant sale

Ideas for Christmas Fantasy tree (if held)

Record education and volunteer hours

Plant swap

Next Meeting: October 22, 2020

(dependent upon COVID-19 status)

Hostesses: Mary Engstrom and Gayle Bahlmann

Our 2020/21 Dues are Due July 1

At our meeting we will be collecting dues or you may send your dues to the Extension Office. If you are writing a check please make it payable to: Allamakee County Extension.

MG's \$5.00 and Associate MG's \$10.00.

Thank you, Master Gardener Treasurer

2020 is half over! As you are busy volunteering at Master Gardener events and tending public gardens around the community, please log your volunteer and continuing education hours online to add to the thousands of volunteer hours already logged in

2020. Visit <https://mastergardenerhours.hort.iastate.edu/> to enter your hours online.

2020 ONLY Number of
Master Gardener Volunteer Hours UPDATE!

- While many of you have found ways to volunteer while socially distanced, Master Gardener volunteers will **NOT** be required to volunteer or participate in continuing education in 2020. If you are able to volunteer or complete continuing education hours, you are welcome to record your hours in the Volunteer Reporting System. (link is above)

Food Preservation 101-Online

Love that fresh garden produce but have more than you can eat? Preserve it! It's not difficult, but you do need to follow safe methods. You'll learn how to freeze, can, and dry foods safely at home.

Intended audience: Adults age 18 years or older

Format: One 2-hour workshop

Special Offering: Food Preservation 101 - Online

Due to COVID-19 concerns, an online Food Preservation 101 workshop option is available at no cost.

- Aug 20, 10:00 am
- Aug 20, 8:00 pm
- Sept 10, 7:00 pm

Each 60-minute workshop will be offered through Adobe Connect. To register, select a date noted as "Online" in the Upcoming Events section. All times are CDT. Registration is available at

<https://www.extension.iastate.edu/humansciences/events?filter=food+preservation+101>

Information about access to the online meeting room will be emailed to registered participants.

Quickinars

The Sow, Grow, Eat and Keep quickinars are 5-15 minute online lessons of seasonally appropriate topics for the garden, food preparation and food preservation. Some of the upcoming topics include: zucchini, apples, applesauce

For additional resources and publications, visit the Sow, Grow, Eat and Keep webpage. Send your food or garden questions to sowgroweat-keep@iastate.edu.

<https://www.extension.iastate.edu/humansciences/sow-grow-eat-keep>

Trivia question...

Iowa's state bird, the American goldfinch is widely adored but the same cannot be said of the goldfinch's favorite flower -- thistles. Most of the ire held towards thistles is directed at three exotic species -- Canada, musk, and bull thistle. How many native (and thus non-invasive) thistles are found in Iowa?

Minutes from June 25, 2020 MG Meeting—Mary Trebbien

Master Gardener non-Meeting minutes of 6-25-20. This meeting was canceled along with the potluck picnic, field trips and Open Class Fair activities due to concerns about the COVID virus. We all look forward to the August meeting scheduled for 8-27-2020, at the Waukon Wellness Center for our annual Plant Swap. (PLEASE NOTE: location change for August meeting is the Waukon City Park, Sweeney Shelter)

Farmers Markets

The area Farmers Markets are looking for local growers, producers, bakers and crafters for the upcoming season. Find your local farmers' market at the following locations:

Waukon Farmers Market, The 2020 Waukon Farmers Market is currently being held at the WW Homestead Dairy parking lot. You can stay tuned to their Facebook page-Waukon Farmers Market-For market rules and registration forms, contact the Allamakee County Extension office at 563-568-6345

Lansing, Lansing Farmers Market contact the City of Lansing for more information.

Harpers Ferry, Weekly Market held on Fridays.



Thymely Tidbits—Pat Meeter

August is a great time to plant kale. Kale prefers cool growing weather. One year we picked kale during Thanksgiving week. We'd had a light dusting of snow but the plant was not harmed. It was a type of kale called scotch or curly. The best way to handle kale is to remove the stem and gently massage the leaves. Then cut it up for salads, stir fry, steam, sauté or braise. Sometimes I braise in a little vegetable broth. There are a couple of kale recipes in Cook's Nook along with an awesome tomato salad recipe from Mary Kay.

I hope you are enjoying the pictures of our fellow Master Gardeners and their gardens. Thank you to those I asked to take photos. If someone has inadvertently not been contacted, please take a selfie of you and your garden and send it to Lana at the Extension Office dahlstro@iastate.edu. I have this ugly feeling, someone might have been left out.

One of the joys in my flower beds this summer has been the blackberry lily. When the seeds were purchased, the package said it was a native plant growing 2-3' tall. While researching, I found it is a native of the Himalayas and named for the Greek goddess of the rainbow. It is supposed to be a short lived perennial, is drought tolerant and actually a member of the iris family. Mine is 4-5' tall, bright orange flowers and forms black seeds late in summer. I found another quote which could fit all of us. "Gardening simply does it allow one to be mentally old, because too many ideas and dreams are yet to be realized". Allan Armitage

Please Welcome to ISUEO—Allamakee County

Please join the Allamakee staff and council as they welcome Julie Fossum to ISUEO!

Julie is the new County Director for Allamakee County. Her duties include office and staff management and educational program coordination. Her first week was memorable as she started during the Allamakee County Fair!

Julie grew up in Allamakee County and lives on a family dairy farm near Waterville, and her children are members of Elon PMC 4-H club. Her degree is in General Studies from UNI with a minor in Business. She holds a Nursing Home Administrator's License and Assisted Living Manager Certificate. After working in health care for 25 years she looks forward to a change in careers and working with the extension staff and council.

Julie's email is jfossum@iastate.edu. WELCOME!



"At the end of the day, you can't compete with Mother Nature. If you've got a great tomato, just a pinch of sea salt is all you need,". Zac Posen

"Do not spread the compost on the weeds." Actually from Hamlet by William Shakespeare.

Having Fresh vegetables is good for your health. Here are some benefits of your garden produce from Spend Smart, Eat Smart. <https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu>

Tomatoes



NUTRITION BENEFITS

- Vitamin C: helps heal cuts and helps the immune system
- Vitamin A: helps with seeing at night and helps immune system
- Potassium: may help to maintain a healthy blood pressure

STORING

- Store at room temperature away from direct sunlight and use within 1 week after it becomes ripe.
- Taste best if not refrigerated; refrigerate only if you can't use before spoiling.

CLEANING

- Rinse under cool running water before eating.
- Pat dry with a paper towel before eating or preparing.

PREPARING

- Slice tomatoes and add them to sandwiches such as grilled cheese, hamburgers or grilled chicken.
- Eat raw tomatoes topped with cottage cheese or your favorite salad.

Cucumbers

NUTRITION BENEFITS

- Vitamin C: helps heal cuts and helps the immune system
- Low in calories: helps prevent weight gain

STORING

- Store cucumbers in the refrigerator and use within 1 week.

CLEANING

- When ready to use, rinse cucumbers under cool running water. Trim off and discard the ends.

PREPARING

- Cucumbers add crunch and vitamins to any meal or snack. They are tasty with your favorite veggie dip or added to other foods.
- Add thinly sliced cucumbers to sandwiches and wraps.
- Add sliced cucumbers to a lettuce salad.
- Cut cucumbers into chunks and mix with tomatoes, onions and other vegetables for a hearty vegetable salad.
- Cook and cool pasta. Then add chopped cucumbers, carrots, tomatoes and reduced-fat salad dressing for a delicious pasta salad.

Onions

NUTRITION BENEFITS

- Vitamin C: helps heal cuts and wounds and helps the immune system
- Fiber: helps reduce blood cholesterol levels and may lower your risk of heart disease

STORING

- Store whole onions in a cool, dark, well ventilated place and use within 4 weeks.
- Refrigerate cut onions in a tightly sealed container and use within 7 days.

CLEANING

- Rinse onions under cool running water right before use.

PREPARING

- Add raw red onion slices to sandwiches and salads for added crunch and flavor.

Seasonality is Important For optimal saving and flavors, select fresh vegetables that are in-season. Options for harvest months in Iowa are;

August: beans, beets, bok choy, cabbage, carrots, chard, collards, cucumber, eggplant, kale, kohlrabi, leaf lettuce, leeks, okra, onions, peppers, potatoes, radish, rutabaga, spinach, summer squash, sweet corn, tomatoes, zucchini.

September: beans, beets, bok choy, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, chard, eggplant, kohlrabi, leaf lettuce, leeks, okra, onions, peppers, potatoes, pumpkin, radish, rutabaga, spinach, summer squash, sweet corn, sweet potatoes, tomatoes, turnips, winter squash, zucchini.

Cook's Nook

Kale, Onion, Cheddar Frittata– Pat Meeter

Frittata in our house is whatever is left in the veggie drawer.

Use a 10" cast iron or ovenproof skillet. Melt 2-3 Tbsp butter or olive oil if preferred. Sauté 1/2 onion and whatever veggies of choice. Since this is a kale recipe, use approximately 2 C chopped kale with the center rib removed. Gently sauté 4-6 minutes or tender. Remove from pan and cool. Whisk 5 eggs with salt, pepper, paprika and garlic powder. When cool stir in kale mixture and 1/2 C cheddar cheese. Cook over medium heat between 8-15 minutes or eggs are set. Can transfer to 400 degree oven for 6-8 minutes instead. Other add ins could be 1 C diced, cooked potatoes, 1 C halved cherry tomatoes, diced cooked bacon, small steamed broccoli. Just about anything goes. It can even be eaten cold.

Colcannon—Pat Meeter

This is a typical Irish dish usually served with corned beef and cabbage. It's basically fancy mashed potatoes. This is a Scottish version.

Peel and cut up large potatoes. Cover with salted water and simmer until tender; drain. For 4-6 potatoes melt 2 Tbsp butter. Add 3 C chopped kale with the center stem removed, 1 large chopped onion and 1-2 Tbsp chopped parsley. Cook until onions are soft. Mash potatoes with 1/2-2/3 C warmed milk. Add in kale mixture and spread in a buttered dish. Bake at 375* for 20 Minutes. Serves 4-6.

Marinated Cucumber Tomato Salad—Madison Area Cookbook

2 cucumbers peeled and sliced into rounds
4 large tomatoes, sliced into rounds
1/2 C thinly sliced red onions
1/2 C extra virgin olive oil
1/4 C red wine vinegar

1 Tbsp sugar
salt and pepper
1 Tbsp slivered fresh basil strips
1 Tbsp chopped parsley

Arrange the cucumbers, tomatoes, and onions in a shallow serving dish. Mix oil, vinegar, and sugar in a small mixing bowl and pour over vegetables. Season well with salt and pepper. Cover and let marinate for at least 1 hour and up to 4 hours. Sprinkle with herbs just before serving. The leftover marinade makes a good dressing for salad greens. Makes 6-8 servings. Enjoy.

Submitted by Mary Kay Winke

Spanish Macaroni—Spend Smart, Eat Smart

- 1/2 pound lean ground beef or turkey
- 1 green pepper chopped (about 1/2 C)
- 1 small onion chopped (about 1/2 C)
- 2 C water
- 1/2 C tomato sauce
- 1 28-ounce can diced tomatoes
- 1 1/2 C uncooked macaroni
- 1-2 teaspoons chili powder

Directions

1. Brown the ground meat in a large skillet. Rinse with warm water and drain to remove excess fat.
2. Add the chopped green peppers and onions. Cook over medium heat until tender.
3. Add the water, tomato sauce, diced tomatoes, macaroni, and chili powder.
4. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to low and simmer for 10 minutes. Stir often to keep the macaroni from sticking.
5. Serve while hot.
6. Refrigerate leftovers.

Serves: 4 Serving size: 1 cup Nutrient information per serving: 310 calories, 7 g total fat, 2.5 g saturated fat, 35 mg cholesterol, 620 mg sodium, 42 g total carbohydrate, 4 g fiber, 8 g sugar, 19 g protein

Clara's Clippings—Clara Lensing, President

It is hard to believe that summer is almost gone. Even though we have been staying at home, time has flown. COVID-19 is really doing a number!

I am planning on having a master gardener meeting in August starting at **6:30 p.m.** I believe that we should be able to practice social distancing if we hold it at the Waukon City Park, Sweeney Shelter. Please bring your own lawn chairs, wear a mask. We will not have any food or drink. Remember though, if you do not feel comfortable attending, we understand. I do not want to make anyone uncomfortable or put anyone at risk.

NOTE TIME AND LOCATION CHANGE OF MEETING

In August, we usually have a plant swap. Please feel free to bring plants to swap.

If I were a betting woman, I would bet that the hospital's Christmas Fantasy would not be held. Do we need to have a plan on the backburner in case I am wrong and it is held? Please bring your ideas along to the meeting on the 27.

According to Seed Savers website, tomato tasting is scheduled for September 12. Keep checking their website in case of cancellation.

- 12:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m. **Hayrides**
- 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. **Tomato Tasting**
- 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m. **Salsa Contest**
- 1:30 p.m. **Tomato Seed Processing Workshop**
- 2:30 p.m. **Seed Savers Exchange Evaluation Garden Tour**
- 3:30 p.m. **Recreating Classic Tomato Recipes: A Food Demo and Tasting**

I was reading a couple of articles in the latest issue of *Horticulture*. Duped! Told how weeds will grow next to plants that look like them. They call it plant mimicry. An example is mugwort vs. ragweed vs. delphinium. They all have similar looking leaves. It is amazing how Mother Nature works.

Another article told all about the dreaded dandelion that I keep digging out of my lawn. The Pilgrims, it is believed, brought it over on the Mayflower. Why, for heaven's sake? The dandelion is a great source of nutrition and also possesses healing powers. It is high in vitamins A and C, more beta-carotene than carrots and more potassium than broccoli and spinach, along with copper and iron. The flowers are great magnets for the bees. The root is edible. Coffee can be made from the roasted root. The white sap from the stems or roots can be applied directly to ease the pain of sores or insect bites. The dreaded dandelion, however, will continue to be at risk of survival in my lawn.

Have an abundance of zucchini? Remember that August 8 is National Sneak Some Zucchini on your neighbor's porch day.

Knowledge is knowing a tomato is a fruit; wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad.

IDALS'S Issues Guidance on Proper Disposal of Unsolicited Seed Deliveries

On July 28, the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship issued guidance on proper disposal of unsolicited seed deliveries. Iowa Secretary of Agriculture Mike Naig confirmed that the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship is aware that individuals in Iowa have received unsolicited seed shipments from China and other countries. The Department is asking anyone who receives unlabeled seed from an unknown origin to retain the original packaging and report it immediately at 515-281-5321. Recipients should not open the seed packet, plant the seed or attempt to destroy it. The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship or United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Animal Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) will collect, analyze and properly destroy the seeds.

When an individual reports the unsolicited seed to IDALS, they will be directed to an online portal where they can enter their address. IDALS will send them a post-paid envelope for sending the seed and associated packing materials back to IDALS. Once gathered, all seed and packaging will go to the USDA for further investigation and proper disposal.

For more information, go to the IDALS homepage <https://iowaagriculture.gov/> and where a banner at the top of the page provides a link for [reporting unsolicited seed deliveries](#).



Master Gardeners At Home— Harpers Ferry



Karren Boot



Jan Kemp-Isen



Connie Benedict

The only two things money can't buy are true love and a homegrown tomato...
Old Saying

"There are no gardening mistakes, only experiments." Janet K. Phillips



Sallie Driscoll



Pat Meeter

"A little tomato who knows her onions can go out with an old potato and come home with a lot of lettuce and a couple of carrots." Herbert V. Prochnoro



Donna Saddler

Kale—The Almost Perfect Vegetable—Submitted by Pat Meeter

Kale, the almost perfect vegetable. Attractive foliage, easy to grow, flavorful and highly nutritious. It's only potential imperfection is a distaste for Iowa's hot, dry summers. But with an understanding of kale's growing preferences, you can reap bountiful benefits in the spring and fall.

☐ Kale, when grown and harvested properly, has a delicate cabbage-like flavor. Rich in antioxidants, anti-inflammatory nutrients and anti-cancer agents, kale is an excellent source of calcium, beta carotene, and vitamin C.

☐ Kale varieties are grouped by leaf shape. Check seed catalog pictures for curly leaved, plain leaved, leaf and spear, and cavolo nero or "dinosaur leaf" kale. Popular varieties grown in Iowa include Dwarf Blue Curled Scotch, Red Russian, Scarlet and Lacinato.

☐ Kale has many uses. Increase the nutritional value of fresh salad greens by tossing in a handful of young kale leaves. Mature kale leaves become ingredients in stir fry, chips, soups, and smoothies. Marinate 5 cups of chopped kale, 3 cups of chopped tomatoes and 1 cup chopped basil in a few tablespoons of balsamic vinegar dressing for two hours, then serve this garden fresh salad to your family. Plan to grow at least 3 to 4 plants per household member.

☐ Start kale seeds indoors in late March, look for started plants at your local farmer's market or direct seed outside in early May. Using started plants will give you a jump start on the growing season; kale will reward you with harvests of tender spring leaves.

☐ The optimal location for kale is an area shaded by a deciduous tree during part of the day. Partial shade will help kale, a cool season plant, endure the hot, dry months of July and August. Kale can also be successfully grown in a container with at least six square inches of space for each plant. The container can be moved into shade during hot summer days.

☐ Kale prefers loamy, well-drained soil with moderate fertility. High nitrogen content, sandy soils or heavy clay soils will negatively affect the flavor of kale. Gently improve the soil with seasoned compost. Keep the soil consistently moist and cool with a 1 to 2 inch layer of organic mulch and supplement with irrigation as needed.

☐ Begin harvesting individual kale leaves when the plant is approximately 8 inches high, starting with the outside leaves first. Pick kale leaves regularly. They can be stored for two weeks to a month in an unsealed bag in your refrigerator crisper bin.

☐ Hot weather tends to make the leaves tough and bitter, but the plants will continue to grow. Excess leaves can be composted, used as mulch, or fed to your chickens. But keep the plants going into late fall or early winter. Kale has its very best flavor after the leaves have been nipped by frost.

Darn Those Critters—Mary Kay Winke

I have a friend who lives on the Southwest part of Waukon. Her husband plants and tends a huge garden and she processes. They have done 50 quarts of green beans as well as working on 40 pints. She said that they will not have any tomatoes as the deer have gone down the row and ate all the young tips and blooms, she said they did that last year also but she blamed the wet weather. My son said that one of his building friends who lives in the country said the deer have done the same to their tomatoes. I know that Carrol S. has hers in cages and yet they reach in and do some damage. The deer have not hurt mine but the coon took the corn down about three days before it was ready. The rabbits worked on my green beans until I spread dried blood meal around the plants. Some years the deer have eaten the beet tops but this year they did not germinate. Such is life with critters. Hope your plants are all doing well.



Here is the "boat" photo taken in June. We take care of every year in the Waterville County Park in town.

-Mary Techau

It's difficult to think anything but pleasant thoughts while eating a homegrown tomato....Unknown

Preventing Tomato Diseases—Paula Flynn, Department of Plant Pathology

Septoria leaf spot and early blight are common fungal leaf diseases of tomato. Cultural techniques can help reduce the risk of foliar blight outbreaks.

1. Water and fertilize to maintain plants in a vigorous condition.
2. Avoid fluctuations of too much and too little water.
3. Avoid wetting foliage when watering. If overhead irrigation is used, water early in the day so the leaves dry quickly.
4. Do not work with plants when the foliage is wet.
5. Eradicate weeds. Mulching around plants can help reduce weed growth and prevent a certain amount of evaporation.
6. Choose wilt-resistant varieties. Varieties that are resistant to Fusarium and Verticillium usually have the letters "VF" as part of the variety name.
7. Fungicide applications can help to prevent fruit and leaves from fungal diseases, especially for gardens that have had a history of problems. Products that contain the active ingredient "chlorothalonil" are effective. Sprays should begin when the plants are about 12 inches tall and applied at 7 to 14 day intervals throughout the season. Using the proper rate and providing good coverage are important. Check the label to be sure it is labeled for tomato diseases and for proper rate information.

At the end of the season, remove as much plant debris as possible and till under remaining debris. This helps reduce the overwintering of tomato pathogens.

Gardening Myths: Five Myths That Are Just Too Good to be True—Richard Jauron

Richard Jauron, Department of Horticulture; Zach Clemens, Communications Specialist

As more and more Americans begin gardening each year, there is a wide array of information online and on social media that offer tips, tricks—and sometimes—wild ideas on ways to feed, protect or help the plants in your garden. While some tips are useful, there are many that just seem too good to be true. Below is a list of some of the most popular garden myths.

- 1. Epsom salts**—Epsom salt, also known as magnesium sulfate ($MgSO_4$), is touted as of the best nutrients for gardens and plants. These purported benefits include increasing seed germination, improving uptake of other nutrients, and enhancing growth and overall plant health. The truth is that Epsom salt should only be used with intensive crop production, and only when the soil or plant has a known magnesium deficiency. There is no scientific evidence that it helps seeds germinate or improves uptake of other nutrients. You should always know soil conditions, plant needs and environmental health before adding chemicals.
- 2. Ants help peonies bloom**—Ants aren't necessary for peonies to flower. The ants are attracted to the sugary nectar produced by the peony buds. The nectar is a good food source for the ants, but peony buds will open without the presence of ants.
- 3. Controlling moles with insecticide**—This perennial myth recommends using insecticides to kill grubs in your lawn, thereby eliminating the mole's food. This may have been true 40 years ago, when insecticide ingredients were highly toxic to people, pets, and wildlife, including earthworms, the mole's main meal. This is not the case anymore, as today's insecticides do not kill earthworms, and won't do anything to get rid of those pesky moles.
- 4. Adding gypsum improves clay soil**—Advertisers like to claim that adding gypsum will help loosen heavy, clay soils and improve soil drainage. However, this has very little benefit. Gypsum is chiefly used to amend sodic soils. Sodic soils are found mainly in arid regions of the western United States. Core aeration is the best way to improve growing conditions for lawns established on clay soils.
- 5. Planting Tums with tomato plants**—A popular myth on the internet and social media is placing Tums or antacids with your tomato plants. The theory is that the Tums gives the soil calcium, yet most Iowa soils don't have a calcium deficiency, and the small amount in tums wouldn't make much of a difference if the soil was deficient. If a gardening trick seems too good to be true, it likely is!

Trivia answer

Six! Tall, Field, Flodman's, Swamp, Hill's, and Wavyleaf thistle are all native to Iowa's prairies and important to American goldfinches and many native pollinators like bees and butterflies. Learn more about Iowa's native thistles in this new article from the Xerces Society and Iowa DNR, [A guide to Iowa's native thistles](https://xerces.org/publications/brochures/guide-to-iowas-native-thistles)
<https://xerces.org/publications/brochures/guide-to-iowas-native-thistles>