



December 2023/January 2024

Project Coordinators

Click on a name to email the listed coordinator:

1876 Coralville Schoolhouse

Karen Martinek

Butterfly House at Fairgrounds

Carolyn Murphy, Mike Murphy

Demonstration Garden

Chris Sedrel, Laurie Roehl

Downtown City Gardens

Linda Schreiber

Ecumenical Towers

Michael Hesseltine, John Weeg

Fairgrounds Beautification

Chris Sedrel, Laurie Roehl

Iowa Firefighters Memorial

Barb Schintler

Hortline

Mary Starry

Hospice Gardens

Melanie Hauptert

Oaknoll Garden Project

Vicki Siefers, Deb Cassell

Plant Sale/Flea Market

Emil Rinderspacher

Plum Grove

Darlene Clausen, Lavon Yeggy, Carolyn Murphy

Rain Garden

Lavon Yeggy

Solon Public Library

Kathy Erenberger

Speakers Bureau

Megan Garrels

Thymes Newsletter

Melissa Serenda, Doug Geraets

Yard & Garden Info

Jackie Wellborn, Kay Mohling

Steering Committee Update and Actions

The JCMG Steering Committee has accomplished some large action items throughout 2023 and are gearing up for the 2024 agenda.

In October, the steering committee gave its approval to add a primary project in northern Johnson County. The Solon Public Library Garden was added to the list of approved projects, with coordinators Kathy Erenberger and Jan Dallas joining the steering committee for their first meeting in November (see feature on page 10).

The last steering committee meeting of 2023 was productive, including the conclusion of detailed discussions and updates to the bylaws with a near-unanimous approval. The bylaws were originally drafted in 2018 with the new updated version adopted Nov. 15, 2023. The bylaws are to be reviewed every three years.

Melissa Close was chosen as vice chair of the steering committee by paper ballot and will serve a two-year term. Megan Garrels, Speakers Bureau coordinator, was also a candidate for the office.

Committee members recognized

Doug Geraets for his service as chair. On Dec. 31, he will transition to past chair, ending Sharon Jeter's past chair term, and Jackie Wellborn will transition from vice chair to chair.

Committee members extend thanks to current and past officers for their service, as well as candidates for their willingness to serve.

All officers, with the exception of treasurer and secretary, will serve a two-year term beginning Jan. 1, 2024, through Dec. 31, 2025, as described in the bylaws.

Budget requests totaling \$16,385 were approved for 2024. Future planning and action is expected to include the revival of the MG Memorial Garden project.

For additional details visit the JCMG webpage at <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/johnson/master-gardener-program>, where JCMG steering committee meeting agenda and minutes are posted along with the current JCMG Bylaws and other helpful MG information.

MG Steering Committee Meeting

Next meeting **Wednesday, January 10, 6:30 P.M.**; hybrid meeting at Extension Office and by Zoom. All MGs are invited to attend; [contact Shannon](#) for more details.

Thymes Deadline

Information/articles for the *Thymes* should be sent to Melissa Serenda at jcmg.thymes@gmail.com. Please send news, volunteer opportunities, stories, pictures, gardening book reviews, etc., for the February issue by **Friday, January 26.**

Public Gardens: MOBOT

BY SHARON RUDE

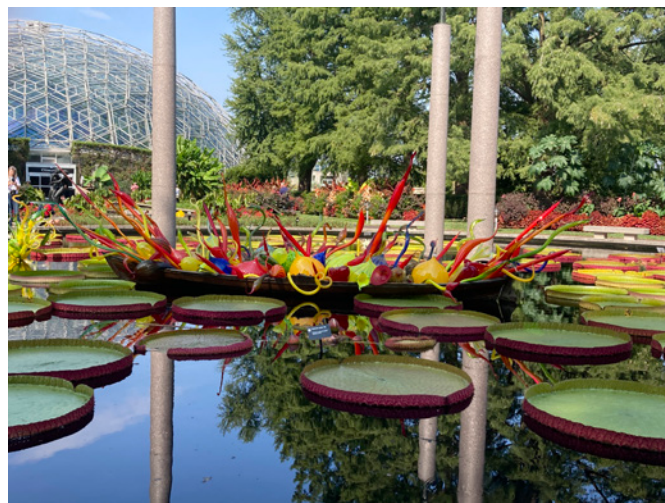
A road trip to the Missouri Botanical Garden has been on my to-do list most of the summer. I was finally able to make it happen Sept. 22 after a busy and hot summer. I was also thrilled to have the opportunity to see another extraordinary exhibit by Dale Chihuly, an amazing glass artist. His large-scale, blown-glass sculptures are designed to mimic nature and plant forms with all their beauty and uniqueness. His sculptures both blend in and stand out wherever they are located among large-scale gardens. I've seen his exhibits at the Denver Botanic Gardens, Cheekwood Estate and Gardens in Nashville, TN, and Chihuly Garden and Glass in Tacoma, WA. When I learned a Chihuly exhibit was going to be at the Missouri Botanical Garden in St. Louis, MO, May 2 through Oct. 15, I knew I had to make this little trip happen, especially since it was only four hours away!

The Missouri Botanical Garden covers 79 acres in south central St. Louis. It is fairly easy to locate once you are within the St. Louis city limits (thanks to the Google Maps app). Founded in 1859, the garden is the nation's oldest botanical garden in continuous operation and is also a national historic landmark. There are two additional gardens outside the city limits — the Sophia M. Sachs Butterfly House in Chesterfield's Faust Park and Shaw Nature Reserve in Gray Summit.



Plan to spend the majority of the morning and afternoon touring the gardens. The Stephen and Peter Sachs Museum is located on the grounds and includes an intricately painted botanical mural on the ceiling. A narrated tram tour is also available for anyone who prefers to ride through the gardens.

Different areas of the gardens include a rose garden, home garden, children's garden, xeriscaping, hosta gardens, and iris and daylily gardens. Naturally no iris or daylilies were in bloom this time of year. I can only imagine how beautiful it would have been to see all of the varieties in bloom earlier in the spring and summer. The number of labeled cultivars was amazing. The gardens also included redwoods (I'm sure not nearly as big as the California Redwoods, but still big nonetheless). I learned from signage that cedar trees grown in the swamp areas of the country grow their own "knees," which look like tall rocks a few feet from the trunk in order to help absorb oxygen into their root systems. I've heard of Autumn Crocus and was surprised to see a lawn full of them. The giant Victoria water lilies were enormous at roughly 24



inches across.

In every area of the garden, a variety of bees and butterflies enjoyed the smorgasbord of flowers. A majority of flowering perennials were supporting bee habitat. Monarchs, swallowtails, yellow and white garden butterflies, and a variety of bees were all enjoying the garden.

The Botanical Garden has done an excellent job of anticipating visitor questions with park signage. The gardens not only included signage with plant names and the locations worldwide where they commonly grow, but also interesting facts about the most unusual plants. Some signs included websites where visitors can find plants if they would like to purchase something for their own gardens.

The Climatron is a climate-controlled dome which includes tropical and rainforest plants. It also includes plants endangered due to climate change,

invasive pests, or other human activities.

If you are up for a road trip, I highly recommend taking a couple of days (allowing for a day at the gardens and travel time) to visit the Missouri Botanical Garden. Visit its website www.mobot.org for more details. Admission to the garden is currently \$14 per person.

Pruning Workshops With Backyard Abundance

Mark your calendars for upcoming pruning workshops taking place at Wetherby Park in Iowa City in February and March:

- Sat., Feb. 10, Shade Tree Pruning Basics
- Sat., Mar. 9, Fruit Tree Pruning

There is a cost to attend each workshop, which varies based on resources. Learn more and register at <https://www.backyardabundance.org/events>.



REMINDER: Record Your Hours!



To record your hours on the Volunteer Reporting System visit <https://mastergardenerhours.hort.iastate.edu/>. The final deadline is **Sunday, December 31**; however it is important to not wait until the last minute. Thank you for your due diligence and please contact Shannon Bielicke, bielicke@iastate.edu with questions.

Confused about how to log hours for a project? Check out the handy guide posted on the [members-only website](#):

- <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/johnson/files/documents/Reporting%20Hours%20Help%20Sheet%202020.pdf>

Location	Category	Project or SubCat Name
Other	Event	Attended Displays
Johnson County Fair Grounds	Demonstration Garden	Demonstration Gardens
Iowa Firefighters Memorial, Carroll, IA	Park, Public Space or Farmers Market	Firefighter Memorial
IA	Other	Heirloom Tomatoes Event
Other	Other	Private Consults
Other	Event	Speakers Bureau
Other	Marketing	Thymes Newsletter
Ecumenical Towers, Iowa City, IA	Community Garden	Ecumenical Towers
1876 School House, Coralville, IA	Community Garden	1876 Coralville Historical School House Gardens
Plum Grove Historical Site, Iowa City, IA	Event	Plum Grove Taste of Heirloom Tomatoes Event
Other	Other	Private Consults
Other	Event	Speakers Bureau



Date * ②
11/28/2023

Location * ②
Other

Location (Other) ②

Category * ②
Marketing

Local Project or Sub-Category ②
--Select--
--Select--
Thymes Newsletter

Midwest Garden Gal To Kick Off Project GREEN Garden Forums 2024

BY LINDA SCHREIBER

Lisa Hinzman Howard, or as she's known in the gardening world the Midwest Garden Gal, will kick off Project GREEN and the Iowa City Public Library's Second Sunday Garden Forums 2024 on Jan. 14.

The forums are held from 2 to 4 P.M. and are free and open to the public. The presentations also stream live on Iowa City Public Library's YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/thelibrarychannel>.

Lisa's topic, *GIY (Grow It Yourself): Veggies 101*, encourages gardeners to adopt the worldwide trend to grow your food to know your food. The program covers soil basics, getting started with raised beds, how to expand the season to maximize your harvest, plus unique ideas around vertical, succession and companion planting for growing your own veggies at home.

Diane Allen, co-president of Project GREEN, reminds us that 18.3 million new growers started gardening during the Covid-19 pandemic and nearly one in three U.S. households grow food. An average garden yields \$600 in produce annually. "Whether you grow your food to eat or share with friends, family and area food pantries to serve those who are food insecure, Lisa's presentation will inspire you and help you find success without overburdening gardeners with a lot of extra work."

Lisa's presentation eases gardening anxiety to help anyone — from pros to wannabes and dabblers — find success in their space. Using research-based garden education, she wants all gardeners, young and mature, novice and experienced, to achieve quick success and find long-term enjoyment in the garden.

She is a Linn County Master Gardener volunteer with 20-plus years of gardening experience. In 2016, Lisa founded Midwest Garden Gal, LLC. She published her book,



"Cheap Tricks Gardening: Cause You Don't Need to Spend a Fortune for Fabulous," in 2022. Signed copies of Lisa's book will be available to purchase at the event.

She has made numerous speaking presentations at Master Gardener and other gardening events. When possible, Lisa teaches from her garden that she designed and built from scratch featuring extensive perennial and annual combination beds, raised beds, using pots and other found objects, a custom-designed three-bin compost system, a native prairie garden, a garden shed with a front porch, and her custom-designed fire pit.

Lisa is a gardening consultant with a Master of Strategic Leadership from Mount Mercy University, and an instructor at the University of Dubuque, where she teaches marketing, public relations and communication. Follow Lisa at midwestgardengal.com.

Master Gardeners may count Project GREEN Garden Forum programs toward C.E. credit hours.



ISU Master Gardener Webinar Series

Iowa State University launched the series Home Gardening Webinars during the global COVID-19 pandemic. The webinars are opportunities for Master Gardener volunteers to expand their knowledge, learn about new topics and connect with experts. Participants can join the Zoom room or view at Facebook Live.

Speakers for the 2024 series will be announced soon. The webinars are scheduled on Tuesdays at 6 P.M., January through March 12, 2024.

A list of 22 previously recorded webinars is available at <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/mastergardener/webinar-series>. The webinars can be also be viewed on the Iowa Master Gardener YouTube site.



Meet a JCMG

Introducing a new regular feature for the JCMG Thymes: Meet a Master Gardener! The inaugural edition will feature members of the JCMG Executive Committee: newly elected Vice Chair Melissa Close, outgoing Past Chair Sharon Jeter, and outgoing Chair/new Past Chair Doug Geraets.

If you have suggestions for an MG to be featured in future issues, email them to jcmg.thymes@gmail.com.

Melissa Close

How long have you been an MG?

I've been in the MG program for a year.

What MG information from your training has stayed with you?

I still think about our first garden tours of the demo garden, fairgrounds, and Plum Grove. The enthusiasm for the projects was contagious.

Hometown and current town:

Iowa City is my hometown and my current town.

Which approved projects do you work on:

The plant sale and the Plum Grove tomato tasting.

Tell us about your garden:

It's challenging and chaotic and constantly changing, but mostly it is a place where I can find my zen.

Favorite garden tool:

My hands.

Garden decorations: yea or nay?

I don't have decorations with the exception of a couple of garden gnomes. But I'm not against them!

Favorite public garden:

I love the serenity of Plum Grove.

Favorite garden residents (flora or fauna):

Zinnia and the baby birds every spring.

Least favorite garden resident (flora or fauna):

Creeping charlie, poke weed, Japanese beetles and squash bugs.

What is something about you or your interests that people probably don't know about (or would be surprised to hear)?

I'm a gamer and horror-movie fanatic.

What's your favorite part about being an MG:

The camaraderie and opportunity to learn from each other.



Sharon Jeter

How long have you been an MG?

I believe the year was 2007, when I took the Master Gardener Program.

What MG information from your training has stayed with you?

I expressly remember being told that as a Master Gardener we are an extension of the Iowa State Extension and we can always find from them the answers to the questions we did not know or could not find

elsewhere. I also realized that I would never know all there is to know about gardening but would learn so many things from my fellow gardeners, a very good reason to volunteer with others on projects and be a good listener.

Hometown and current town:

I grew up in Keota, Iowa, where my father was an electrician and an avid gardener from whom I learned much, especially telling him, no I did not want to come grate the horseradish but would gladly take some when it was done. I now live in rural Iowa City, where I have been busy the past two years landscaping my new home. I lived in town at the same location for 45 years and literally planted everything at that residence.

Which approved projects do you work on:

As a MG I first was leader of the Speakers Bureau, which I enjoyed very much especially when I was able to talk about gardening through the seasons, and share parts of my garden with friends I then went to co-chair of the steering committee, and eventually chair. During that time I helped move the Demonstration Garden, acquire and move the corn crib to the Fairgrounds, and chaired it for a number of years before stepping down.

Tell us about your garden:

My garden is full of color. I try not to crowd it and always remove certain plants that I do not like how they performed in August so I see how I want it to look next season. I have mostly perennials in my beds and supplement with a few annuals.

Garden decorations: yea or nay?

I do not use a lot of garden ornaments.

What is something about you or your interests that people probably don't know about (or would be surprised to hear)?

Let's see...something that most would not know about me is that I raise goats, and love watching them.

What's your favorite part about being an MG:

I enjoy being a Master Gardener because it has opened many new friendships to me and much better than being a professional strawberry picker (a private joke with my dad that you will have to ask me about when we meet up).



Doug Geraets

How long have you been an MG?

I took the MG training in 2016, so that makes seven years as a MG volunteer!

What MG information from your training has stayed with you?

That's a tough question to answer. There was so much good information we learned and as time goes by there are pieces of information that pop into my brain (maybe not immediately useful but fun to remember)! I would say learning about the lifecycle of insects and technical aspects of composting.

Hometown and current town:

Hometown is Canton, SD and my current location is rural Johnson County, just 3 miles east of Iowa City on Hwy 6.

Which approved projects do you work on:



I currently volunteer for the Plant Sale & Flea Market (along with Roger Jensen, I coordinate the digging and potting of plants); Thymes newsletter (was editor for four years, now serve as reviewer and editor of submissions, and I compile the events calendar); Demonstration Garden (help intermittently with tasks); and Downtown City Gardens (volunteer when I am able). I also served as vice chair, chair, and now past chair of the Steering Committee.

Are there any "non-approved" projects you also volunteer for?

There are a variety of non-county approved projects I've volunteered for: tree plantings at Terry Trueblood and Wetherby Park and this past year at Grow Johnson County.

Tell us about your garden:

I'm fortunate to live on 4.5-acre property, so my garden can be as big as I want it. Usually this is limited by how much I can keep up with weeding. I have a large vegetable garden area, a variety of berries, and flower gardens (4 to 5 areas).

Favorite garden tool:

Would have to say my trusty generic hoe would be my favorite tool — I keep it clean and sharp!

Garden decorations: yea or nay?

I would say nay on garden decorations. I've not been much for decorations (that's my non-artistic side).

Favorite public garden:

Haven't visited a lot of public gardens but a couple of favorites: 1. McCrory Gardens at South Dakota State University in Brookings, SD, and 2. Rotary Botanical Gardens in Janesville, WI.

Favorite garden residents (flora or fauna):

Two favorite garden residents are praying mantis and toads.

Least favorite garden resident (flora or fauna):

Least favorite garden residents would have to be Japanese beetles and striped/spotted cucumber beetles!

What is something about you or your interests that people probably don't know about (or would be surprised to hear)?

I ran track and cross country in high school and college; at South Dakota State, I ran on a national championship cross-country team and qualified for nationals in the 3,000-meter steeplechase.

What's your favorite part about being an MG:

Favorite aspect of being an MG is volunteering with other MG, getting to know them and successfully accomplishing projects.



Winter Birds: Black-capped Chickadee

Poecile atricapillus

What's going on inside the head of this little Black-capped Chickadee (*Poecile atricapillus*)? For one thing, its brain has grown in the past few months! Chickadees will grow new brain cells before winter begins to help them remember where they have cached seeds to eat later as well as learn behaviors to help them function in the social groups in which they overwinter. They will also lose older brain cells with memories that are no longer needed, creating an annual cycle in which the chickadee's brain is "refreshed" to keep its mental information current.



Photo via Sycamore Greenway Friends



Project Updates

Downtown City Gardens

LINDA SCHREIBER, COORDINATOR

Downtown City Gardens summary of fall activities

This year, Master Gardener volunteers completed converting 1,920 square feet in the Capitol Street Parking Garage south garden into native perennials. The transition complements other downtown gardens featuring native perennials that are helping combat global climate change at a local level. The two-year MG project has filled in quickly to crowd out weeds giving Downtown City Gardens volunteers time to explore other area gardens.

In June, DCG volunteers visited six of the eight MG gardening sites. (Note: the addition of the Solon Public Library Garden as an approved primary project increases the number of sites — not gardens — to nine.) This year and throughout the fall, DCG volunteers have participated in additional creative exchanges assisting MG coordinators and at other local gardening and public sites including:

- Iowa Firefighters Memorial — planting annuals and perennials
- Ecumenical Towers — garden redesign
- Grow Johnson County — picking peppers
- Iowa City *Get Outside* — prairie seed collection
- Johnson County Fairgrounds Gardens — ongoing maintenance
- Mercy Iowa City — rose and hosta care
- Sycamore Greenway Trail — trail maintenance, plant identification
- Whispering Meadows Wetland — litter patrol, trash pickup to improve water quality for wildlife

Oaknoll MG volunteers have indicated they are ready to update a very visible garden at the lifetime retirement residence that requires design assistance and plant material as well as labor to install. DCG volunteers have also requested an opportunity to observe a prairie burn and this is on the list of activities to explore next.

The goal of each garden visit is to broaden MGs' understanding of local organizations, their function and missions. The visits to MG-approved garden sites provided our MG volunteers insight into each garden. Some projects focus on food production, others integrate the landscape into the garden, others feature strictly flora and some offer both plants and food production. In addition, each garden varies in size, location, number of visitors to the site and property ownership. All visits were to public or nonprofit organization-managed sites.



DCG volunteers assisted with trail maintenance and litter patrol in the South District of Iowa City.

Celebrating JCMG efforts, milestones in 2023: Hospice Gardens at Willow Creek Park

Before we turn the page to 2024, we should recognize a Johnson County Master Gardener milestone. Plans for this peaceful garden nestled among the trees along the trail in Willow Creek Park began in 2000 when plans for a garden and rest stop along the bike trail were drawn up. Project GREEN, Iowa City Hospice, Iowa

City businessman Casey Cook, and the City of Iowa City launched the garden that offers a respite and quiet reflection. The *Thymes* newsletter reported in 2003, Johnson County Master Gardeners Melanie Hauptert, Janice Hining, Mary Moreland, John and Darlene Neff, Kay Rosenberger, Ellen Roan and Hazel Seaba volunteered to plant and maintain this peaceful garden site that is dedicated to Iowa City Hospice volunteers. Iowa City Forester Terry Robinson provided Master Gardeners support as Willow Creek Park grew around the garden. Melanie Hauptert (MG 2004) continues to coordinate the garden's activities and volunteers.

Ecumenical Towers

MICHAEL HESSELTINE AND JOHN WEEG, COORDINATORS

Ecumenical Towers: Phase 2 Success*

First, let's talk about that asterisk. We did have one team member get stitches. Sounds like he will be fine but it served as a large reminder to think safety first. We want to watch out for each other.

Now, let's talk about the project. In Phase 1 we added a hügelkultur bed in front of the patio. This is the practice of burying wood to act as a water reservoir and later, a nutrient source for that bed.

The second phase added a raised galvanized steel hügelkultur bed (16 feet long by 3 feet wide) in front of the patio to allow wheelchair access. This raised bed was the most requested item from the residents. They will take care of the planting and we will take care of the soil. This is less gardening and more construction so we worked with Dennis Boelk from Ecumenical Towers Board of Directors and his grandson, Matthew. For the construction we would set posts, attach the metal, and finally trim/support with wood.



A small crew worked to build and trim out the box frames.



The finished raised bed is 16 feet by 3 feet in size.

On Friday, Oct 27, Dennis and Matthew brought in the material needed and we set the posts to be ready for Saturday, when a small crew worked to build the box frames and attach the metal and trim it all out with wood accents. We also added more reinforcement since we had the material and this bed will hold more weight than you think once full.

The following Friday, Nov 3, we brought in wood to fill the lower half. This gives volume to the contents without adding as much weight as soil, keeps the box from becoming compacted, holds moisture for the plants growing there and will contribute nutrients in the years to come.

We put a truckload of manure over the wood and added tomato vines to give green to balance the brown (nitrogen source to balance our carbon source).

Saturday, Michael and John did the final touch — alternating soil and compost by the bucketful to fill to overflowing. This will now settle over the winter (there were many voids in the wood section) and we will top off with compost as needed.



The lower half of the box was filled with wood.

Phase 3 yet to come

The last phase of these changes will be a water source in the new hügelkultur bed for the wildlife — the birds, bees, and butterflies. We will add this in the spring once all has a chance to settle.

It has been a summer of major changes at this site. This could not be done without the large group effort that is appreciated by the residents, as well as the pedestrians who pass by. Next spring we will add the water feature and plants for our pollinators. Success is measured by the residents, but I think a simple measure will be once we get goldfinches regularly at this site.

Thanks to

- Dennis Boelk and grandson for material, expertise and hard labor
- Holly Hotchkiss for the good soil
- Joel Wells for the rotten wood (and that is a good thing!)
- Tom Isaacs, as usual, for the manure



The bed will be topped off with compost as needed after settling over the winter.

Solon Public Library Garden

KATHY ERENBERGER AND JAN DALLAS, COORDINATORS

We are excited to announce the newest Johnson County Master Gardener approved primary project, the Solon Public Library Garden. The Solon Library has been an ongoing non-approved project in partnership with the Friends of the Solon Public Library for the past four or five years.

We have many new and exciting projects planned for 2024 and 2025, including refurbishing some old beds, adding new beds to a new interactive musical instrument garden, adding plants surrounding the recently installed outdoor storybook, planning and preparing a butterfly garden, hosting a series of educational presentations, and preparing and installing plant markers around the grounds.

We will be kicking off the year with a planning meeting in mid-to-late February and a spring cleanup day around Earth Day (April 22). Kathy Erenberger (kmerenberger@gmail.com) and Jan Dallas (janice.lynn.dallas@gmail.com) are the co-coordinators for this project. Please feel free to reach out to either of us with any questions on this project.





MG Upcoming Events/Volunteer Opportunities

*****Check organization website for cancellations prior to event date.*****

December 2023/January 2024



100 Grannies

<http://www.100grannies.org>

No events listed this month.



Backyard Abundance

<http://backyardabundance.org/events>

No events listed this month.



Bur Oak Land Trust

<https://buroaklandtrust.org/events/>

No events listed this month.



Eastern Iowa Bird Watchers/IC Birds

<http://www.iowacitybirdclub.org/events>

Sunday, Dec. 17, All Day.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT. We need participants in the field as well as feeder watchers. If you wish to be a field participant, you will be assigned to a small group with an experienced leader, and your leader will contact you to coordinate a meeting time and place on the day of the count. You can participate for part or all of the day, and some groups look for owls before dawn. Most groups spend some time hiking outdoors and sometime birding from the car, so you will need to dress for the weather.

On count day, we will meet at noon for an optional mid-day compilation — please note the NEW LOCATION in Meeting Room A at the Coralville Public Library, 1401 5th Street. Please park in the lower level. Bring your own lunch. We will not have an evening meal and compilation this year.

If you wish to be a feeder watcher, you can count the birds at your feeders and in your yard. I'll need your address in order to verify that you live in the count circle, which includes most of the Coralville Reservoir, Lake Macbride, Solon, North Liberty, Tiffin, Coralville, and the northwest portion of Iowa City. If you have any friends or neighbors who may want to participate, please pass this information along to them.

To participate, please contact Chris Edwards ASAP by email (preferred) at credwards@aol.com or by phone or text at 319-430-4732. The sign-up deadline is Wednesday, Dec. 13, but it is very helpful if you let me know sooner. I'll need to know if you want to participate in the field or as a feeder watcher.



Iowa State Extension

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/calendar/>

No events listed this month.



Johnson County Conservation

<https://www.mycountyparks.com/County/Johnson/Events.aspx>

Thursday, Dec. 21, 6:45 to 9 A.M.

SUNRISE SOLSTICE SAUNTER. Cedar River Crossing (North Access), 5573 Sutliff Rd NE, Solon. The winter solstice is often seen as a time for rebirth, renewal, and self-reflection. Celebrate the first day of winter and the lengthening of daylight as we watch the sun rise over the astronomical clock in this beautiful natural area. The walk is about three miles round trip over somewhat uneven ground.

Registration at <https://www.mycountyparks.com/Login.aspx?ReturnUrl=/County/Johnson/Park/JOHNSON-COUNTY-EDUCATION-PROGRAMS/Events/23446/Sunrise-Solstice-Saunter/Register.aspx&q=1> closes 24 hours in advance. If you are fully registered, you can expect to receive an email "receipt" from MyCountyParks after registration. You will also receive an email from the leading naturalist a couple days in advance of the program. If you do not receive these emails, you may not be registered; call 319-645-1011 for assistance in this case.

JOHNSON



Johnson County-ISU Extension

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/johnson/>

No events listed this month.

Linn County



Linn County-ISU Extension

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/linn/>

No events listed this month.



Project GREEN

<http://www.projectgreen.org/> and <https://www.facebook.com/www.projectgreen.org>

Sunday, Jan. 13, 2 P.M.

SECOND SUNDAY GARDEN FORUMS: Lisa Hinzman Howard will present *GIY (Grow It Yourself): Veggies 101*. Iowa City Public Library. (See details on page 4.)



Seed Savers Exchange

<https://www.seedsavers.org/events>

No events listed this month.



Trees Forever

<https://treesforever.org/events>

No events listed this month.

Santa's Favorite Holiday Mix (the elves like it too!)

BY CAROLYN MURPHY

- 4 cups pretzels
- 4 cups corn Chex (I use a mix of wheat, corn, rice Chex)
- 1 cup mixed nuts
- ½ cup margarine (cut up)
- ¾ cup packed brown sugar
- ¼ cup light corn syrup
- ½ cup dried cranberries (I use more)
- ½ cup white vanilla baking chips



Put the pretzels, Corn Chex, & Nuts in a bowl (large enough to stir).

Melt butter, brown sugar corn syrup in a pan on the stove. Bring it to boil stirring constantly so doesn't burn).

Pour over pretzels, Corn Chex, and nuts. Mix till coated. Add cranberries.

Spread out on two sheet pans lined with parchment paper.

Melt vanilla chips and drizzle over the mix. Add a few more cranberries for a holiday treat.

Let it set up and break into bite size bits. Store in an airtight container if it makes it through the cooling process.

(Hint: melt white chips in a microwave safe-glass bowl at 30 second intervals, stirring after each melting. 1 to 2 minutes should do it)



MG Birthdays

December 2023

Dan Berkowitz
Helene Donta
Michelle Frauenholtz
Doug Geraets
Melanie Hauptert
Alice Linhart
Susan Miller
Louise Murray
Mary Ann Murray
Emil Rinderspacher
Barbara Robinson
Sharon Rude
Chris Sedrel
Lavon Yeggy



MG Birthdays

January 2024

Deborah Cassell
Darlene Clausen
Joan Dinnel
Maggie Elliott
Michael Farran
Beth Fisher
Gerald 'Pat' Kealey
Karen Martinek
Fred Meyer
Jim Ridenour
Susan Stump

2023 JCMG Steering Committee Officers

Chair..... Doug Geraets
Vice Chair Jackie Wellborn
Secretary Barb Robinson
Treasurer Jean Holzhammer
Past Chair Sharon Jeter

2024 JCMG Steering Committee Officers

Chair..... Jackie Wellborn
Vice Chair Melissa Close
Secretary Barb Robinson
Treasurer Jean Holzhammer
Past Chair Doug Geraets



The Johnson County Master Gardener Thymes is published monthly, except January and August. It is distributed under the auspices of Iowa State University.

Mail can be sent to:

*Iowa State University Extension and Outreach
Johnson County
Attn: Master Gardener Newsletter
3109 Old Highway 218 S.
Iowa City, IA 52246*

**IOWA STATE
UNIVERSITY**
Extension and Outreach
Johnson County Extension

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach does not discriminate on the basis of age, disability, ethnicity, gender identity, genetic information, marital status, national origin, pregnancy, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, or status as a U.S. veteran. Direct inquiries to the Diversity Officer, 515-294-1482, extdiversity@iastate.edu.

Send email to: bielicke@iastate.edu