

Johnson County Master Gardener Thymes

March 2023

Project Coordinators

Click on a name to email the listed coordinator:

Yard & Garden Info Jackie Wellborn, Kay Mohling

Butterfly House at Fairgrounds

Carolyn Murphy, Mike Murphy

1876 Coralville Schoolhouse

Karen Martinek

Ecumenical TowersMichael Hesseltine, John Weeg

Demonstration Garden

Chris Sedrel, Laurie Roehl

Downtown City Gardens

Linda Schreiber

Fairgrounds Beautification

Chris Sedrel, Laurie Roehl

Firefights' Memorial
Barb Schintler

Plant Sale/Flea Market

Emil Rinderspacher

Hortline

Mary Starry

Hospice Gardens

Melanie Haupert

Buckets of Flowers & Scarecrow Contest

Lavon Yeggy

Oaknoll Garden Project

Vicki Siefers, Deb Cassell

Plum Grove

Darlene Clausen, Lavon Yeggy, Carolyn Murphy

Speakers Bureau

Megan Garrels

Thymes Newsletter

Melissa Serenda, Doug Geraets

Continuing Education 2023 to highlight grasses, gardening and trees

BY LINDA SCHREIBER

Ake plans to attend Continuing Education
2023. The program, sponsored by GreenState Foundation, will be held at the Johnson County Extension Office on Sunday, March 5, from 1 to 4:30 P.M.

Three presenters will be featured. **Kristine Nemec, Iowa Tallgrass Prairie Center** at the University of Northern Iowa, will address *Native Plants* at 1 P.M. She is the statewide coordinator for county roadside programs, providing training and education for Iowa's county roadside programs, and conducting outreach to raise awareness of the value of roadside programs.

Aaron Steil, ISU Consumer Horticulture Extension Specialist,

will speak about *Community Gardening* at 2:15 P.M. He has been with Iowa State University for more than 15 years, and in 2021, Mr. Steil became the Consumer Horticulture Extension Specialist working with county Extension offices across the state to answer home gardening questions for all Iowans.

Nick McGrath, Trees Forever,

will present *Planting Trees for Tomorrow* at 3:30 p.m. Mr. McGrath joined the Trees Forever staff last year. Previously, he worked as a retail nursery manager with the Iowa DNR assisting private landowners, cities and counties across east central Iowa as they recover from the derecho and look to replant for future generations.

The in-person Continuing Education 2023 program is free and open to the public. Attendance is limited to room capacity and registration is required at https://go.iastate.edu/3RY76D. Attendance provides Master Gardeners continuing education credit hours.

The presentation will also be streamed live

on City Channel
4. The program
will be recorded
for rebroadcast on
the City Channel 4
YouTube channel

and the JCMG website.

Note: If the weather presents hazardous travel issues, an alternate date of Sunday, March 19, has been chosen. Updates will be posted to the JCMG website and Facebook page.

MG Steering Committee Meeting

Next meeting **Wednesday**, **March 15**, 6:30 P.M.; hybrid meeting at Extension Office and by Zoom. All MGs are invited to attend; <u>contact Shannon</u> 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 March issue by **Friday, March 24.**

2023 Plant Sale & Flea Market - we need you!

BY EMIL RINDERSPACHER

Spring is in the air and it's time to think about the 14th annual Plant Sale & Flea Market on Saturday, May 20, and what you can do to help. We need all Master Gardeners involved. You can help by donating plants and flea market items; working presale activities and at the sale; and helping spread the word about the sale to friends, family, gardening friends and coworkers.

Here's what you can do:

DONATE PLANTS AND FLEA MARKET ITEMS

We need perennials, grasses, herbs, veggies and annual starts, trees, shrubs, house plants and garden items for the flea market. Email me at emil-rinderspacher@uiowa.edu and let me know what you plan to donate. If you aren't sure what or how many, let me know so I can add your name to our donor list.

As a reminder, we are repotting all perennial donations this year in sterile potting mix to guard against jumping worms. Time your digs so you can bring your plants to one or more of our four potting events (April 29, May 3, 4, 6).

VOLUNTEER

There are many jobs to be done in April and May, as well as sale day. You can help at our potting events; help make plant markers and signs; work the set up crew on May 17; help price, label and set up sale floor on May 18 and 19; and work one of the many jobs at the sale on May 20. A call for volunteers will go out the first week of April through Sign-Up Genius. **Please sign up to work!** It's fun and gives you a chance to get to know and to learn from other Master Gardeners.

SPREAD THE WORD

Tell friends, family, gardening friends, co-workers about the sale. We'll send you a poster to print and post at your work, church, or favorite haunt. If you use Facebook, share the event with your friends.

You'll receive more detailed information about donations, potting events, and volunteering in the coming weeks. Email me if you have questions at emil-rinderspacher@uiowa.edu.

WANTED: Items for Butterfly House Silent Auction

BY MIKE AND CAROLYN MURPHY, BUTTERFLY HOUSE CHAIRS

A Silent Auction will be held during the Plant Sale & Flea Market to support the Butterfly House at the Johnson County Fair. We usually have a variety of items, thanks to the Master Gardeners' talents and humor. If you have interesting or unique yard/garden items and are willing to donate them, please let us know. You can send a list of your item(s) to Mike & Carolyn Murphy at candmmurphy@aol.com or call us at 319-541-7079.













Seedy Surprise

BY MELISSA SERENDA

It's a funny little plant, string of hearts (*Ceropegia woodii*). With succulent, heart-shaped leaves and stone-like tubers that can form along its easily-tangled vining stems (giving rise to another common name, rosary vine), there is a lot going on in its pot.

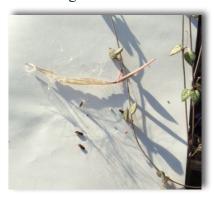




Add to that the odd-looking flowers: pinkish bulbed tubes topped with five petals—petals that bear little resemblance to the pretty decorations we usually imagine surrounding the reproductive parts of flowers. They are, in fact, clever traps to lure their fly pollinators into the tube, whence they are unable to escape until the flower shrivels, at which point the hapless fly makes its escape along with a cargo of pollen to deliver to the next flower it visits.

One morning, making the watering rounds, I noticed a little bit of fluff on the shelf near the vine. Further investigation revealed a pod that looks like a very skinny milkweed seedpod, with flattened

brown seeds attached to a silky white fluff. It was the end of December, any my uncomprehending brain could only wonder how I brought in a milkweed seedpod and left it, unnoticed, on the shelf with the houseplants until I saw that it was attached to the string of hearts vine.



How curious! Research confirmed that the string of hearts does in fact belong to the same family as milkweeds, explaining the seedy resemblance. I am left, however, with the unappealing mystery of how many (and what kind of) flies are secretly living in my house through the winter and busily pollinating the flowers.

Sources/additional reading:

- https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/articles/string-of-hearts-ceropegia-woodii/
- https://www.uaex.uada.edu/yard-garden/ resource-library/plant-week/string-heartsvine.aspx



Project GREEN and the Iowa City Public Library present Second Sunday

2023 Winter Garden Forums*

Meeting Room A - 2 P.M.

Free to the Public





Sunday, March 12, 2023, (Daylight Saving Time), **Jane Wilch**, Iowa City Recycling Coordinator, will discuss opportunities and options that citizens can make for *A GREENER Tomorrow*. Iowa City's Resource Management Division and staff are leaders in recycling programs that benefit our community and Iowa. The Iowa City Landfill offers gardeners compost to benefit the soil in your garden and mulch at an affordable price. Plastic is overtaking our oceans and our landfills. What can consumers do to take climate action and reduce their environmental footprints? Learn all about the waste reduction efforts happening locally, and how you can participate to be part of the environmental solution.

*Second Sunday Garden Forums are free and open to the public. Attendance at the forum provides Iowa State University Extension Master Gardeners education CEUs. Second Sunday Garden Forums are live streamed on the Iowa City Public Library Cable TV and YouTube channel, and promoted in our newsletter and on Project GREEN's website – www.projectGREEN.org. Visit Project GREEN website for more information www.projectgreen.org/ or on our Facebook page: https://www.facebook.com/www.projectgreen.org/

Musings on The Garden March 2023

BY DOUG GERAETS

as I write this it's the end of January and the overnight temperature was minus 4°F. There is a 2 to 3-inch layer of snow on the ground. That should come as no surprise in Iowa during the middle of winter.

Garden catalogs—which arrive earlier every year—are beginning to pile up on my dining room table (so far ... SEEDS 'N Such, Totally Tomatoes, Chief River® Nursery Co. Johnny's Selected Seeds, and JUNG SEEDS & PLANTS). While paging through them, thoughts of starts and planting in the garden begin. This is the time when I begin to ponder what varieties should be planted this garden season. Should I stay with the proven varieties I've planted over the past years or consider something different? Usually, I will at least try some new varieties that are often offered as a "free gift" when ordering from seed catalogs.

I have many favorite vegetables I plant but this can change from season to season. Lately, tomatoes and peppers have been favored probably because of their versatility, stunning colors, and unmatched flavors. This month I'm going to focus on tomatoes as they play such a central role in so, so many food dishes and there is such a wide-ranging number of

types, varieties, and colors!!

For ten or so years, or more, I've settled on a regular group of tomato types and varieties. This is out of necessity and need for quality and dependability.

My tomato types are divided into these categories (see next page for table): 1) beefsteak, 2) slicers, 3) Roma-type (also referred to as sauce tomatoes), and 4) Plum-type (a small tomato great for drying/roasting). My preferred varieties are summarized in the table with my comments about their characteristics. There is a yellow beefsteak tomato not included in the table that I save seeds from and plant every year but unfortunately we didn't record the varietal name years back so I can't tell you what it is! I usually plant 16-20 tomato plants knowing that we will have extra produce. Anything we don't use will be given to friends and/or donated to local food pantries.

Every growing season has its own personality. As the daylight lengthens and temperature slowly warms I'm looking forward to, as I always do, the approaching growing season. With luck and a new season my tomatoes won't be knocked down from herbicide drift and we'll have plenty for canning, giving to friends, and donating!

Doug's Favorite Tomato Varieties & Characteristics		
Variety	Characteristics	
Beefsteak		
Delicious	Beefsteak type that can get very large; some ribbing & cracking does occur. Indeterminate.	
Big Beef (hybrid)	Beefsteak type that has limited cracking & ribbing; now available in a hybrid with added disease resistance. Indeterminate.	
Slicer		
Celebrity (hybrid)	Slicer; medium size, very smooth and little cracking; now available as a hybrid with added disease resistance. Indeterminate.	
Romas		
San Marzano	Very popular Roma-type. Great for sauces and roasting. Indeterminate.	
Yaqui	Roma-type also great for sauces. Gets quite large for a roma-type. Determinate.	
Viva Italia	Also a popular Roma-type. Tomato is long with a pointed end. Great for sauces and roasting. Seems to get end-blossom rot more that some. Determinate	
Plum-type for Roasting/Drying		
Principé borghese	Small, meaty mid-size tomato. Great for drying. One of my earliest to fruit (might give Early Girl competition). Determinate.	



MG Upcoming Events/Volunteer Opportunities

Check organization website for cancellations prior to event date.

March 2023



100 Grannies

http://www.100grannies.org

Monday, Mar. 13, 2 to 3 P.M.

LECTURE SERIES: Jane Wilch, the City of Iowa City's Recycling Coordinator, Location: Zoom—Senior Center. Jane will provide a recycling and composting update, common contamination issues (wishful recycling) and programming to come. Where is support needed? Why batteries need to go to drop-off locations. Why Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, and Recycle.



Backyard Abundance

http://backyardabundance.org/events

Wednesday, Mar. 8, 6 to 8 P.M.

Harvest Preserve, 1645 N Scott Blvd, Iowa City. FULL MOON NATURE + FOREST THERAPY. Join Backyard Abundance and certified Nature and Forest Therapy Guide Emelia Sautter for a walk with the natural world. Experience Nature + Forest Therapy, also known as Forest Bathing, a sensory-focused practice that invites us to slow down and be present with self and the natural world around us. Registration: sliding scale fee: \$30 - \$5, based upon your access to resources.

Saturday, Mar. 25, 10 A.M. to 12 P.M.

ALTARS & RITUALS AT HARVEST PRESERVE: A MINDFUL PRACTICE. Explore the role altars and rituals can play within your own spiritual and healing work. Acquire new tools or deepen and enhance your current practices. You will be led through a series of self explorations, intended to promote growth in outlook and attitude as well as support increased self awareness. There will be a brisk hike and mindful practices throughout the experience. You will also be invited to find offerings which call to you as we journey our way through the Preserve. Registration: sliding scale fee: \$30 - \$5, based upon your access to resources.



Bur Oak Land Trust

https://buroaklandtrust.org/events-3/

Thursday, Mar. 23, 4:30 to 7 P.M.

PRAIRIE PREVIEW, 28 S Linn St., Iowa City. Keynote speaker is Connie Mutel, author, passionate conservationist and longtime science writer for the University of Iowa's IIHR-Hydroscience and Engineering department. She will discuss her latest book, "Tending Iowa's Land: Pathways to a Sustainable Future." Book contributor and Bur Oak Land Trust Board President Larry Weber will also speak about his water-focused vision for land management. Prairie Preview also features an exhibitor fair with more than 30 organizations ready to share opportunities for local nature enthusiasts to support or get involved in Iowa's outdoors.



Eastern Iowa Bird Watchers/IC Birds

http://www.iowacitybirdclub.org/events

Saturday, Mar. 11, 6:30 A.M. to 2 P.M.

FIELD TRIP: BURLINGTON AREA MISSISSIPPI RIVER. For spring waterfowl migration. Target birds include ducks, geese, pelicans, Winter Wren, and many more. This is an all-day trip led by Burlington local expert birder Chuck Fuller, with stops at locks and dams, riverside parks, and other hotspots. Walking is usually short distance from frequent stops. We'll stop for lunch at a nearby restaurant. Dress for cold and wind, and bring a scope if possible. Meet Karen Disbrow at 6:30 A.M. at the Fin & Feather parking lot, 125 Hwy. 1 W, Iowa City; or at 8:00 A.M. at the Port of Burlington, 400 Front St., Burlington. Carpooling is encouraged.

Tuesday, Mar. 14 and 21, 7 to 8:30 P.M.

INTRODUCTION TO BIRDING COURSE: Basics of Birding at the Conservation Education Center in Kent Park. Learn about birding techniques, equipment, bird identification and more! Sign up for one session or all 6! Advanced registration is requested, and is free to club members. Call (319) 645-1011 to register. https://iowacitybirdclub.org/beginners-course/

Thursday, Mar. 16, 7 P.M.

IC BIRD CLUB "THE MAGIC STUMP" Zoom Meeting: Bob Dolgan will host a showing of his nature film "The Magic Stump," the story of an Illinois tree stump that's attracted a phenomenal variety of wintering raptors over the years, including two rare Prairie Falcons. The goal of "The Magic Stump" is to draw attention to the story of raptors that winter in our highly altered agricultural landscape. Bob will introduce the film and answer questions afterwards.

JOIN ZOOM MEETING: <u>HTTPS://US02WEB.ZOOM.US/J/84016553191?PWD=T09YK3K1M2LPZXFIEMF2NGO1RI9UZZ09</u>

Saturday, Mar. 18, 8 A.M. to 12 P.M.

FIELD TRIP: CONE MARSH Cone Marsh in Louisa County for Snow Geese, Sandhill Cranes, and migrating waterfowl with leader Linda Rudolph. A local favorite not to be missed at this time of year! We'll stop at several points around the marsh and take a walk on the dike, returning by noon. Dress for cold, wind, and wet or muddy trails, and bring a scope if possible. Meet Linda at the Fin & Feather parking lot, 125 Hwy. 1 W in Iowa City. Carpooling is encouraged.



Iowa State Extension

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

Saturday, Mar. 18, 7:30 A.M. to 3 P.M.

ART OF GARDENING Muscatine Community College, Strahan Hall 152 Colorado St., Muscatine. Muscatine Community College's Continuing Education Department is again offering its popular Art of Gardening daylong seminar, to educate and inspire others to seek enjoyment and fulfillment through a variety of home gardening-related topics and activities. Cost: \$50, some sessions have additional workshop costs. https://eicc.edu/future-students/events/art-of-gardening.aspx



Johnson County Conservation

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

Tuesday, Mar. 7 and 14, 10 A.M. to 1 P.M.

GREAT YETI HUNT 2023. There's a yeti on the move, and she's roaming through Johnson County Conservation parks! Help us track her over the next two months! Every 2 to 3 weeks, the yeti will show up somewhere new—but in classic yeti style, she only roams in the most wild places: places with few visitors and few trails. Anyone tracking her should be comfortable navigating and visiting more primitive park settings and hiking anywhere from 1 to 4 miles (sometimes off trail). Whenever the yeti is spotted somewhere new, we'll help you find her by posting clues to her location on this event page. It'll be up to you to figure out what park she is at, then head out on a hike to find her. Use our collection of park guides to help piece together the clues: https://jccnaturenotes.wordpress.com/2020/05/07/how-and-where-to-explore-in-johnson-county-collected-guides-of-jcc-properties/

The below events require registration: Registration 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.

Tuesday, Mar. 14, 1 to 3 P.M.

FORAGING IN SPRING. F.W. Kent Park, 2048 Highway 6 NW, Oxford. Take a walk with a JCC naturalist and learn about some of the foods that can be foraged, in spring! The focus of this class will be on beginner plants for the whole family to enjoy.

Friday, Mar. 17, 10 A.M. to 12 P.M.

MINI MUSHROOM GROWING KITS. F.W. Kent Park, 2048 Highway 6 NW, Oxford. *A \$10 fee per kit is due at the beginning of class to cover program supplies* If you would like to start out simple (and small) on your journey to growing mushrooms this is the program for you. All materials we use will be re-purposed from items that would otherwise be tossed. All ages welcome but young children might need an adult to help.

Friday, Mar. 17, 2 to 4 P.M.

NATURALIST HIKE. Cangleska Wakan, 4045 245th St. NE, Solon. Hike through the forest trails at Cangleska Wakan and Big Grove Preserve. This 3.5-mile hike is open to all. We'll hike up and over many hills and cross a couple streams. Dogs are welcome on this hike—dogs must be kept on leash (up to 6 feet long) and their waste bagged and removed.

Monday, Mar. 20, 6:20 A.M.-8:45 A.M.

SUNRISE EQINOX SAUNTER. Cedar River Crossing (north access), 5473 Sutliff Rd. NE, Solon. Celebrate the first day of spring as we watch the sun rise over the astronomical clock in this beautiful natural area. The walk is about 2.5 miles round trip.



Johnson County-ISU Extension

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

No events listed this month.



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, Mar. 12, 2 P.M.

A GREENER TOMORROW. Jane Wilch, Iowa City Recycling Coordinator, will discuss opportunities and options that citizens can make for A GREENER Tomorrow. Iowa City Public Library, Meeting Room A. Iowa City's Resource Management Division and staff are leaders in recycling programs that benefit our community and Iowa. The Iowa City Landfill offers gardeners compost to benefit the soil in your garden and mulch at an affordable price. Plastic is overtaking our oceans and our landfills. What can consumers do to take climate action and reduce their environmental footprints? Learn all about the waste reduction efforts happening locally, and how you can participate to be part of the environmental solution.



Seed Savers Exchange

https://www.seedsavers.org/events

No events listed this month.



Trees Forever

https://treesforever.org/events

Saturday, Mar. 11, 9:30 A.M. to 12:30 P.M.

GROW YOUR TREE CANOPY IN KALONA. Kalona Public Library, 510 C Ave., Kalona. Join Trees Forever Field Coordinator Peter Lundgren at the Kalona Public Library to learn about the tree canopy in Kalona and the importance of having a biodiverse and robust community of trees in urban areas. The purpose of this Tree-Mendous workshop is to advocate for increasing tree canopy in Iowa towns through improved community forestry management practices. We will be examining the new 2022 Iowa DNR tree inventory, explore local tree ordinances, and discuss current and emerging threats to trees—including the notorious Emerald Ash Borer. The first half of the morning will conclude with the top ten ways to grow our urban tree canopy and cover grant opportunities available to plant trees in town to improve biodiversity and canopy cover. We will finish off the morning with a Tree Awe Walk to the local park to identify trees and enjoy some time in nature.

Thursday, Mar. 30, 5:30 to 7:30 P.M.

GROWING YOUR TREE CANOPY IN WAUKON. Robey Memorial Library, 401 1st Ave NW, Waukon. Grow your Canopy workshop as part of the library's "Live and Learn" series.

Fruit Tree Workshop Offer Hands-on Apple Tree Grafting



MG Birthdavs

I owa State University Extension and Outreach is offering a fruit tree grafting workshop on April 4, 2023 at the Johnson County Extension office in Iowa City. Participants will hear a presentation on why and how to graft fruit trees by commercial horticulture specialist Patrick O'Malley and take part in a hands-on apple tree grafting demonstration.

"As spring approaches, we are offering apple tree grafting workshops to homeowners, gardeners or horticulture enthusiast to demonstrate and practice a whip and tongue graft with apple rootstocks", Said Patrick O'Malley, commercial horticulture specialist with ISU Extension and Outreach. "We will also provide information on how to care for grafted trees in your landscape."

Space is limited. **Registration deadline: March 28, 2023.** Register at https://go.iastate.edu/RNAVNW. Registration fee includes rootstocks, scions and equipment needed to self-graft two apple trees to take home for \$40 per person. If available additional apple rootstock can be purchased for \$5 each.

March 2023		
4Reed Renneckar		
8 Mahmooda Ahmad		
11 Sadia Embree		
14 Mardi Rasmussen		
15Carl Hensley		
19 Angela Murphy		
20Nancy Wehrheim		
20 Laurie Canady		
22Joanne Grey		
23 Barb Schintler		
24Torrie Masko		
26 Chris Parizek		
27Karen Miller		

2023 JCMG Steering Committee Officers	
Chair	Doug Geraets
Vice Chair	Jackie Wellborn
Secretary	Barb Robinson
Treasurer	Jean Holzhammer
Past Chair	Sharon Jeter



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



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