



## Johnson County Master Gardener

# THYMES

October 2022

### MG Steering Committee Meeting

Next meeting **Wednesday, Oct. 12, 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 [msserenda@gmail.com](mailto:msserenda@gmail.com) or Doug Geraets at: [dougrph@aol.com](mailto:dougrph@aol.com).

Please send news, volunteer opportunities, stories, pictures, gardening book reviews, etc., for the **November** issue by **Friday Oct. 28**.

### Volunteer Opportunity

There is a continued need for volunteers to help clear brush from the Sycamore Greenway Trail in south Iowa City: the small trees and shrubs threaten to crowd out the native prairie flowers and grasses that line the trail. Workdays are scheduled for various Sunday mornings September through November, from 9 to 10:30 a.m. The work will primarily involve using loppers to remove woody brush.

The hours can be counted as “other” JCMG project hours (when recording hours, mark it under *other* and then make sure to include *location* and a *description of the task*)

This work is done with support of the City of Iowa City; please visit the SignUp Genius link for more details and event dates:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c0f48acab2fa4>

[fdc25-brush2](#). Email JCMG Melissa Serenda at [msserenda@gmail.com](mailto:msserenda@gmail.com) with questions.

### Hügelkultur—Water, Water, Everywhere!

Hügelkultur is a method in the world of permaculture—championed by Sepp Holzer—of making raised beds based on buried logs. These beds can be up to 6 feet high with the sides as steep as 70 degrees. See: <http://www.seppholzer.info/huegel-culture-design/>.



The beds hold moisture and slowly release nutrients as the wood decomposes into humus. The wood and the voids created by the logs become a reservoir for the plants above.

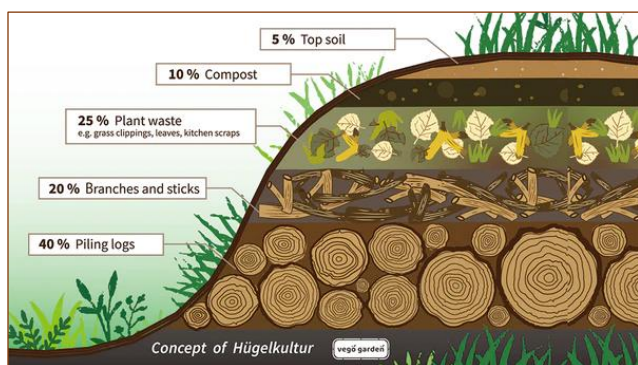
We need your help to implement a modified version of a hügelkultur berm in the demonstration garden at the JC Fairgrounds.

Currently, the demo garden has a 2-foot cap of compacted soil on top of the original farmland. This compacted soil is not holding much water, so we are watering often—too often. Ideally, we want to draw the roots down below this horizon into the original soil. Our plan is to place logs and other

organic materials on that horizon to form a reservoir that is almost a foot thick, so that all roots will reach the reservoir, and some will push right through to the original soil (tomato and bean roots will grow down 3 feet or more).

To create our berm, we will:

1. Till in compost and remove that layer
2. Till in old manure and remove that layer
3. Place the old logs
4. Replace the manure layer
5. Replace the compost layer
6. Let it all rest until spring



This berm will be a no-till bed going forward. We will just add compost on top each fall to prepare for spring planting.

**When:** Saturday, Oct 15, at noon. Rain date will be Sunday, Oct 16, at 9 A.M.

**Where:** Demonstration Garden, JC Fairgrounds

**What to bring:** Your shovel if you have one (don't worry if you don't) and gloves!

This project will count as volunteer hours.

Let me know if you plan to attend:

[john.weeg@act.org](mailto:john.weeg@act.org)

Read more at:

<https://www.permaculturenews.org/2012/01/04/hgelkultur-composting-whole-trees-with-ease/#:~:text=You%20can%20make%20small%2C%2060cm,plant%20on%20and%20around%20it>

## Wanted & Needed

- **20-feet of pavers ...** to edge garden at Ecumenical Towers. Contact John Weeg at [john.weeg@act.org](mailto:john.weeg@act.org); will pick up!
- **Sawdust ...** for composting at the demo garden. Contact John Weeg at [john.weeg@act.org](mailto:john.weeg@act.org); will pick up!
- **Well-aged manure ...** for composting at the demo garden. Contact John Weeg at [john.weeg@act.org](mailto:john.weeg@act.org); will pick up!
- **Tinkerer ...** to work on water delivery system for Ecumenical Towers. Simple design – just need someone to implement and test. If you patent and sell the rights, JCMG gets 50% of profits! 😊
- **Steering wheel** for '57 Chevy ... no wait ... that was tradiod! 😊

## Master Gardeners Fall Houseplant Swap!



## BRING A PLANT ... SHARE A PLANT

Join your fellow Master Gardeners for an inaugural 2022 Fall Houseplant Swap. Share your propagation(s), rehome a plant(s) that no longer brings you joy and find something new, for FREE! It's also a great opportunity to visit with your fellow MG houseplant enthusiasts. Please register ahead of time for this FREE event so we have an idea of how many people plan to attend.

## WHAT: HOUSEPLANT SWAP

**Where:** Heritage Barn breezeway, near the Demonstration Garden and corn crib! Bring a plant, share a plant! It's that easy! Or bring cuttings, or accessories (pottery, trellises, saucers, etc.) to trade! All plants must be labeled with common and scientific names (if known). Please include light and water requirements and other information about your plant to share. And, please be sure the plants are disease and pest free.



**WHEN: OCTOBER 15, 2022, 10:30–11:30 A.M.**

**WHAT TO EXPECT:** We'll have tables set up in the designated area. You should arrive at 10:30 A.M. to get set up. Then you'll have time to chat with your fellow plant enthusiasts and scout out what's available to trade. We'll make an official announcement at 10:45 A.M. to begin the swap! Sharing will continue until everyone is satisfied or we've run out of things to trade!

**THE GOAL:** take home something new ... NOT what you brought to share!

## 2022 Plant Sale & Flea Market ...

**BY EMIL RINDERSBACHER**

**The 2022 Master Gardener Plant Sale & Flea Market was a huge success!** A record-setting \$19,026 was raised through sales, donations, and the silent auction. The Johnson County Extension Council and sale sponsor Hills Bank generously covered all plant sale expenses. As a result, \$17,526 goes to the MG General fund to support our many programs and activities and \$1500 raised through the Silent Auction goes to the Butterfly House. The previous high in sale income was \$9,109 in 2019.

Thanks to the volunteers who donated plants and flea market items and to the many volunteers who collectively worked hundreds of hours digging, potting, making labels and signs, hauling compost and plants, working set up and the sale, and helping with clean up and post-sale activities. And thanks to those who came to the sale and bought plants!

The 2023 Plant Sale & Flea Market will be Saturday, May 13, 2023. Mark your calendars! As you put your gardens to bed this fall, start thinking about what plants you can donate to next spring's sale.

## It's Thyme to ... October

**BY MELISSA SERENDA AND LINDA SCHREIBER**

**A**s we transition from summer to the cooling days of early fall, it's time to begin putting our gardens to bed—while also thinking ahead to next year.

Tender perennial plants that can't survive our Iowa winters must receive special care if we'd like to keep them around for next year. Dahlias, cannas, and gladiolus corms and roots should be dug and prepared for storage over the winter.

Gladiolus corms should be dug in early fall a month or so after they finish blooming and before a hard freeze. Cut the foliage off above the corms and allow them to sit in an airy location for two to three weeks to cure, after which you can separate the corms and store in a loose basket or bag over the winter in a cool, dry location at a temperature around 40°F.

Cannas and dahlias should be dug after a hard frost and allowed to dry for several hours to a day. Dahlia tubers should be stored upside down in boxes and covered with vermiculite, sphagnum peat, or wood shavings, with the boxes stowed in a cool area 40 to 55°F. Canna rhizomes should also be stored in boxes, crates, or mesh bags between 40 and 50°F.

Collect seeds from your favorite annuals like zinnia, marigold, and poppies to sow next spring. Coleus and geraniums can be overwintered as cuttings or in pots indoors.

Houseplants and tender herbs also should be brought indoors before the weather gets frosty. When bringing plants indoors, be sure to inspect carefully for pests and disease.

It's also harvest time! Pumpkins and winter squash should be harvested when their vines die back after frost. Be sure to harvest any remaining apples as well.

If you want to grow garlic or shallots the best time to plant them is late fall 3 to 4 weeks before hard frosts and the ground freezing. For southeast Iowa this would typically be the last week of October into early November. This will enable the bulbs/cloves to establish some roots before the coldest time of the year. After planting, cover rows with 4 to 5 inches of dried grass, chopped hay or leaf mulch to insulate during winter.

Though the season wanes, it is nevertheless time for planting deciduous trees and shrubs, as well as spring-flowering bulbs like tulips and daffodils that should be in the ground before it freezes.

Before you know it, chilly winter will arrive and you can enjoy the memory of your well-tended garden and know you've prepared it well for its seasonal sleep.

#### Sources

- <https://store.extension.iastate.edu/Product/5693>
- <https://extension.missouri.edu/publications/g6620>
- <https://store.extension.iastate.edu/product/5525>
- <https://store.extension.iastate.edu/Product/Cannas-for-Home-Landscapes>

## Eastern Iowa Orchid Society Show & Sale 2022

The Eastern Iowa Orchid Society Show & Sale is BACK!

Oct. 22 and 23

Saturday: 10 A.M.–5 P.M.

Sunday: 10 A.M.–4 P.M.



Location: [Elk's Lodge 801 33rd Ave SW, Cedar Rapids, IA](#)

The show will feature hundreds of blooming orchids displayed by exhibitors from regional orchid societies across the Midwest, amateur hobbyists, and professional growers, all centered around a Halloween theme.

Orchid plants will also be for sale from regional vendors. Volunteers will be available to answer any questions about the orchids in the show.

 <b>MG Birthdays</b> 	
October 2022	
<b>2</b> .....	Muriel Naumann
<b>3</b> .....	Jeff Baker
<b>4</b> .....	Kristin Ho
<b>5</b> .....	Janice Hining
<b>6</b> .....	Mary Starry
<b>11</b> .....	Ann Ruppenkamp
<b>13</b> .....	Ramona McGurk
<b>18</b> .....	Paul Deninger
<b>25</b> .....	Connie Funk
<b>30</b> .....	Marge Jensen



## Butterfly House Attendance Soars Like The Butterflies It Supports

Prepping is a big part of annual fair exhibit

BY LINDA SCHREIBER



Families with children in 4-H know the challenges of preparing for and exhibiting at the annual county fair. Master Gardener Butterfly House coordinators experience the same trials of getting an exhibit ready in Iowa's July heat.

This annual activity, launched in 2013, with three partners – the Johnson County Master Gardeners, Johnson County Agricultural Association and Forever Green Grows.

It's a family affair for Master Gardeners Mike and Carolyn Murphy who organize the exhibit. The Murphys are joined by daughter Angela, also a Master Gardener, and sons Ryan and Joe, to coordinate a host of activities including training and scheduling nearly four dozen Master Gardener volunteers, acquiring and selling merchandise and helping assemble butterfly accessories.



Lucy Hershberger of Forever Green Grows, MG Carolyn Murphy,  
Nancy Scott, Iowa Naturalist, Nancy Crews, Director, Milkweed Matters and Angela Murphy

Forever Green Grows owner Lucy Hershberger coordinates outfitting the butterfly house each year. The house is erected on the hoop shell that stands between the Heritage Barn and the Master Gardeners' Demonstration Garden. As soon as the Forever Green Grows crew gets the shade cloth cover in place covering the shell, crews bring in plants to dress the house and feed exhibitors on display.

Next, Lucy and Carolyn lead MG volunteer training with information about the 10 species of butterflies in the exhibit, how to handle the butterflies, their habitat, diet and migration routes.

The Murphys and the Hershbergers also bring multiple exhibits that are displayed outside the Butterfly House to showcase butterflies in every stage of development.



Alice Linhart and Janice Hining (yes they're in there somewhere!) showing butterflies to visitors



Exhibit tents for Butterfly House at JC Fair 2022

In 2022, over four fair days, more than 6,200 people attended the exhibit. The exhibit was staffed by 42 Master Gardener volunteers and the Murphy and Hershberger families and staff. Multiple shifts are needed to cover the 8-hour-plus days that the exhibit was open to the public.

Carolyn explains weather conditions this year delayed the butterfly migration north to Iowa. Along the way butterflies were met with drought conditions in Texas and Oklahoma which stunted milkweed growth and set the Monarch's move north back weeks. As a result migratory monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*), known for its spectacular annual journey across the Americas, is now listed on the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species™ as endangered, threatened by habitat destruction and climate change.

In addition to preparing for and staffing the four-day fair, funding the cost of the exhibit also requires a coordinated fundraising efforts—the cost of butterflies alone is more than \$1,500 each year. Forever Green Grows shoulders the cost of the plant and flower displays in the Butterfly House which are estimated to be hundreds of dollars. This year, Master Gardener Mahmooda Ahmad offered visitors henna paintings to raise funds.

As families stand in line, waiting their turn to get in the Butterfly House to experience butterflies first-hand, learn about the important role these pollinators play in our food production, kids take turns visiting “Millie,” the caterpillar tunnel, and have their photos taken in front of the custom butterfly photo stand-in.

Though the preparations can take weeks and the schedule can be exhausting and dependent on the weather, the final efforts are always worthy of the joy volunteers see on children's faces when a butterfly lands on their arm or head.





Child enjoying the lepidoptera at Butterfly House



Monarchs love Iowa!

Each fair's ending is always highlighted with the release of hundreds of butterflies before a large crowd of cheering spectators. It is also the signal that Johnson County MG volunteers can enjoy a well-deserved rest before the next family-oriented activity centered on environmental education.



Seed ball table at the JC Fair 2022



Butterfly release at this year's 4-H Fair 2022!!

## **MG Upcoming Events/Volunteer Opportunities**

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

**October 2022**

### **Backyard Abundance**

<http://backyardabundance.org/events>

Sliding scale fee for programs: from \$0 to \$30, based upon the program and your access to resources. See details and register for all programs at <https://www.backyardabundance.org/events>.

#### **Wednesday, October 12, 2022, 6 to 7:30 P.M.**

NURTURE SEEDS AND SOIL. EDIBLE CLASSROOM, 400-450 E Burlington St, Iowa City. During this class, we will explore the best practices for putting our gardens to bed and how these gardening activities can be applied to our lives for mental, physical and spiritual well-being. Seed-saving, weeding, mulching and cover-cropping will be practiced through fun, hands-on activities.

#### **Thursday, October 13, 2022, 6 to 8 P.M.**

NATURE AND FOREST THERAPY FOR VETS AND/OR VETS' SPOUSES. Kent Park, Dam Parking Lot, 2048 Hwy 6 NW, Oxford. This is a veteran's focused event. Veterans and/or the partners of Veterans are invited to attend. In honor of your service, we invite you on this Forest Bathing Experience. We know that a number of veterans have experienced a lot through their service. Forest Bathing is a wonderful practice by which the body is naturally regulated by the energy and medicine of the Earth.

#### **Saturday, October 15, 2022, 10 A.M. to 12 P.M.**

RITUALS AND ALTARS AT HARVEST PRESERVE: A MINDFUL PRACTICE. Harvest Preserve, 1645 N Scott Blvd, Iowa City. Join us in learning about the use of ritual and altars within your own healing work, including the benefits of their use as well as how they may provide enhancements to current practices. You will be led through a series of self explorations, focusing on inner growth.

#### **Friday, October 21, 2022, 6 to 8 P.M.**

NATURE AND FOREST BATHING THERAPY FOR VETS AND/OR VETS' SPOUSES, Palisades-Kepler State Park, west end at river, 700 Kepler Dr, Mt Vernon. This is a veterans' focused event. Veterans and/or the partners of Veterans are invited to attend. In honor of your service, we invite you on this Forest Bathing Experience. We know that a number of veterans have experienced a lot through their service. Forest Bathing is a wonderful practice by which the body is naturally regulated by the energy and medicine of the Earth.



**Wednesday, October 26, 2022, 4:30 to 5:30 P.M.**

YOGA OUTSIDE: OCTOBER. Harvest Preserve, 1645 N Scott Blvd, Iowa City. Tap into your wild peace and deep presence. All-level yoga to help you come back to the body, calm the mind, and expand your comfort zone. We will ask the tall, old stones and trees to support a sense of place while we breathe with the green. Classes will be customized based on the needs of attendees. Tell us if any accommodations are needed for inclusion. We will reschedule meetings in bad weather.

### **Bur Oak Land Trust**

[www.facebook.com/BurOakLandTrust/events](https://www.facebook.com/BurOakLandTrust/events)

**Thursday, October 20, 2022, 5:30 to 7:30 P.M.**

THE GOLDEN HOUR: ART FOR CONSERVATION PHOTO FEST. Terry Trueblood Recreation Area, 579 McCollister Blvd., Iowa City. Enjoy appetizers, drinks, and live music by harpist Mara Maas. Come and go as you please from 5:30 to 7:30 P.M. Each attendee will receive photo greeting cards to take home as a special gift! All proceeds will support Bur Oak's mission of advancing biodiversity in Eastern Iowa by protecting resilient landscapes and connecting people to nature. You will also have the opportunity to purchase high quality metal print photos from local photographers. There will be a silent auction for the display photos signed by the photographer.

### **Eastern Iowa Bird Watchers/IC Birds**

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

**Saturday, October 15, 2022, 7:30 A.M. to 12 P.M.**

FIELD TRIP: HAWKEYE WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA. HWMA parking lot on Swan Lake Road, across from Swan Lake (GPS coordinates 41.776081, 91.675009). For sparrows and other fall migrants. We will carpool our way around Hawkeye Wildlife Area. Expect moderate hiking at some viewing areas. Dress for the weather and potential wet and muddy trails. Bring a spotting scope if you have one. Ending time around noon. Details at <https://iowacitybirdclub.org/event/field-trip-hawkeye-wildlife-management-area-3/>

**Thursday, October 20, 2022, 6:45 to 8:45 P.M.**

BIRD CLUB MEETING. Zoom. In "Birding in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, South Texas," Brandon Caswell will offer a synthesis of two trips to "The Valley" within the last few years. A brief overview of the area will be covered. Non-avian sightings as well as birding hotspot information will be covered. South Texas specialty birds will be discussed with photos. Some recent mega-rare birds will be highlighted along with implications on their possible range expansion into the United States. Many photos to be shared. Details and link at <https://iowacitybirdclub.org/event/bird-club-meeting-27/>

### **Johnson County Conservation**

<https://www.facebook.com/pg/johnsoncountyconservation/events/>

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

#### **Various dates and times**

SEED HARVESTS. Various locations. Help JCC harvest native prairie seeds for future restoration projects! Volunteers are able to take small amounts of native seed home after each event. See <https://www.mycountyparks.com/County/Johnson/Events.aspx> for dates, times, locations and to register.

**Saturday, October 8, 2022, 7 A.M. to 3 P.M.**

IOWA RIVER CLEAN UP. Hills Campground and Access, 4210 520th St SE, Iowa City. Help beautify the Iowa River! Over eight years of this annual event, volunteers have removed 65 tons of trash and over 1000 tires from a 10-mile stretch of river! Volunteers are needed both in canoes and on land to remove junk. After a full and satisfying day of positive earth work, an after party will be held at Big Grove Brewery with free drink tokens provided for all volunteers, donated by Big Grove. To sign up, go to: <https://tinyurl.com/iowarivercleanup> (registration closes October 3). Details at <https://www.mycountyparks.com/County/Johnson/Park/JOHNSON-COUNTY-EDUCATION-PROGRAMS/Events/21444/Iowa-River-Clean-Up.aspx>.

**Saturday, October 22, 2022, 10 A.M. to 2 P.M.**

CONSERVATION EDUCATION CENTER OPEN HOURS. Conservation Education Center, F.W. Kent Park, 2048 HWY 6 NW, Oxford. Come on out to the park to enjoy the changing fall colors in both the forest and prairie, and stop in to the Conservation Education Center to explore the displays and activities, including an owl meet & greet at 10:30. The Storybook Trail will be up around the CEC trail loop, and a pumpkin scavenger hunt will be up around the CEC trail loop, with extensions on trails in the area.

**Thursday, October 27, 2022, 4:30 to 6:30 P.M.**

SUNSET HIKE AT TWO HORSE FARM. Two Horse Farm, 2257 Sugar Bottom Road NE, Solon. Two Horse Farm is the latest property to be added to the public lands owned and managed by Johnson County Conservation. This property is a gem, with restored prairies and high quality oak/hickory woodlands. Participants on this hike will get an intro to the site so that they have greater confidence visiting on their own in the future. As a sunset hike, this program will end in near dark conditions. Participants should bring headlamps and warm layers. The hike will be 1.5-2 miles long on a maintained trail. Register at <https://www.mycountyparks.com/County/Johnson/Events.aspx>.

**Linn County-ISU Extension**

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

**Tuesdays, 6:30 to 7:30 P.M.**

Free Linn County Master Gardener Library Talks 2022. Hiawatha Public Library, 150 W. Willman St., Hiawatha.

- Oct. 4: Moving on In! Gear up for Bringing Plants Indoors!
- Oct. 11: Growing Culinary Herbs
- Oct. 18: Fall Yard and Garden Tool Care
- Oct. 25: Living with Bambi

**Thursdays, 6:30 to 7:30 P.M.**

Free Linn County Master Gardener Library Talks 2022. Cedar Rapids Ladd Library, 3750 Williams Blvd. SW, Cedar Rapids.

- Oct. 6: How to Make a Milk Jug Greenhouse
- Oct. 13: Celebrating Median Bearded Iris
- Oct. 20: Extending the Growing Season



## Additional Resources/Event Opportunities

### 100 Grannies

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

### Iowa State Extension

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

### Johnson County-ISU Extension

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

### New Pioneer Coop

<https://www.newpi.coop/community>

### Project GREEN

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

### Seed Savers

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

### Trees Forever

<https://treesforever.org/Events>



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#### **Mail can be sent to:**

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