



Johnson County Master Gardener

THYMES

December 2021/January 2022

MG Steering Committee Meeting

Wednesday, Jan. 12, 7 P.M.; Zoom meeting. All MGs are invited to participate—contact Shannon for information and instructions!!

Thymes Deadline

Information/articles for the Thymes should be sent to Melissa Serenda at msserenda@gmail.com or Doug Geraets at: dougrph@aol.com.

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

Winter Webinar Series ISU Extension and Outreach



Follow the link below for a variety of webinars that will expand your knowledge, introduce you to new topics, and allow you to connect with experts from across the field. The three subject areas for this year's series are **pollinators**, **landscaping**, and **propagation**. All events are free and open to the public, so invite a friend to learn more about these exciting topics with you.

<https://www.extension.iastate.edu/mastergardener/winter-webinar-series>

Winter Storage For Tubers, Rhizomes

BY LINDA SCHREIBER

Proper storage for dahlia tubers and canna bulbs/rhizomes will mean many years of blooms.

Dahlias start producing new tubers in the spring but the roots don't mature until late in the growing season. The longer they are in the ground, the more mature they will be, which will improve the likelihood they will survive in storage. The same is true of canna lilies.

Wait to dig the tubers until the foliage is killed by frost. Delay cutting dahlia stems until right before digging – the hollow stems collect water which promotes crown rot and decay. Canna stems can be cut before digging.



During the growing season, both tubers and rhizomes have grown beyond their spring planting size. Use a garden fork to loosen the soil around the plant and gently lift the tubers from the ground while being careful not to cut into or skin the tubers which can allow disease organisms to enter and lead to rot.

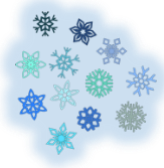
Remove soil from the tubers and rhizomes. Clumps can be divided in the fall or spring. Let tubers and rhizomes dry and “cure” out of direct sunlight and allow loose soil to fall away before storage. Label stored dahlias—you can use a felt-

tipped pen to write the name/color directly on the tubers.

There are many ways to store the tubers. I wrap dahlia tubers in newspaper and put them in a cardboard box. Canna rhizomes are also wrapped in newspaper. The containers are covered to keep freezing temperatures from reaching the stored tubers/rhizomes when the garage door opens. Our heated garage keeps the stored tubers/rhizomes from freezing. Check tubers occasionally to remove any that have started to decay.

FINAL REMINDER: *Record Your Hours!*

Winter is soon upon us, definitely bringing an end to the gardening season.



Please record your 2021 hours — the deadline for hours to count in 2021 is midnight Dec. 31. Click [here](#) to record your hours on the Volunteer Recognition System.

Proper Time to Prune Trees and Shrubs



The link listed below provides a document from ISU Horticulture and Home Pest News reviewing the proper times for pruning trees and shrubs in the yard and garden:

<https://hortnews.extension.iastate.edu/2015/03-13/pruning.html>

Gift Ideas for Gardeners This Holiday Season



BY KAY MOHLING

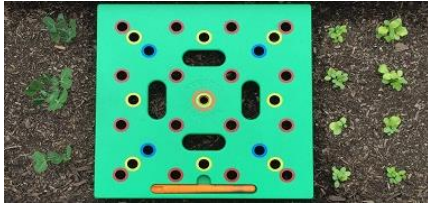
The gift giving season provides a perfect opportunity to shop for traditional garden items and for the latest new gadgets. If you have a gardener on your list, now is a good time to look at gift lists especially for gardeners. [Better Homes and Gardens](#) and [The Spruce](#) both have a “10 Best” list of ideas for gardeners. One of my favorite websites is [Gardener’s Supply Company](#) where the merchandise is divided by type of gardener (flower, vegetable, indoor, urban, senior, and young gardeners). [Amazon](#) is also an option for garden tools and accessories. In addition to these websites, remember to stop by your local garden centers this holiday season. Popular gift ideas include clippers, shovels, soil knives, hats, gloves, and kneeling pads, but it’s always interesting to see what new products are available each year.

Wheelbarrows and carts are great gifts to make garden work easier; this year Gardener’s Supply is promoting a new [Summer Sled](#) (pictured right) as more versatile and maneuverable than a wheelbarrow, with runners that allow for easy hauling of bulky loads like landscape items and mulch.



For those who like an orderly garden and straight rows, their new [Garden Row Marking Line](#) (pictured at left) comes with wooden pegs and a line that adjusts up to 20-feet long. Stake one peg at the start of the row, unravel the twine, and stake the other peg at the end of the row to plant straight rows quickly and easily. If you

want to try square foot gardening, Amazon offers a [Square Foot Gardening Template](#) (pictured below).



A seed spacing template, ruler, seed spoon and planting guide are included. Pressing the square template into the soil creates a garden grid, and the color-coded holes show where to plant seeds or seedlings for correct spacing.

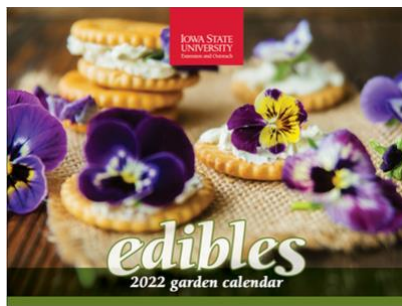
A [silicone seed-starting tray](#) (pictured right) is also new at Gardener's Supply. The reusable tray is durable and flexible, so



seedlings pop out easily. To sanitize between uses it can be washed in the dishwasher.

Gift certificates to local gardens, arboretums, and garden stores also make great gifts, and they fit in stockings. Other stocking ideas include nitrile gloves, magazine subscriptions, plant labels, and garden plant ties.

The [Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Garden Calendar](#) is always on my list. The calendars, which feature beautiful



photographs and monthly gardening tips, can be purchased for \$8 at the online [Extension Store](#) or at our ISU Extension and Outreach office.

Sometimes the most exciting gifts are the ones not on a typical list. One of my favorite gifts was a stack of posts and rails that I received years ago to replace an aging fence line. As I look out my window at that fence today, I'm reminded of the thoughtfulness of my family. Your gardener will appreciate any gift chosen with them in mind.

Humidity and Houseplants

BY MELISSA SERENDA

This can be a rough time of year for tropical houseplants. After enjoying Iowa's hot and humid summer—which may have felt a little like “home” for these plants that originated in rainforests and other warm, humid places—they are suddenly plunged into a central-heating desert where the relative humidity (RH) can be 30% or less.

Plants that evolved to live in places where the RH can reach 70-80% lack the adaptations to thrive in drier areas that more hardy temperate plants have to conserve water. As a plant transpires through openings in its leaves called stomata, the evaporation of water through the stomata causes the plant to pull water and nutrients up from the roots to the leaves. Some plants that are particularly sensitive to dry air include ferns, prayer plants (*Marantaceae* family), nerve plant (*Fittonia*), and *Anthurium spp.*

When the plant is in an appropriately humid environment, the water lost through transpiration doesn't exceed the water it can take up from its roots and from the surrounding air. But if the air is too dry, the plant will lose more water than it can move up from the soil and cause wilting or browning of leaf tips. There are a few things that can be done to help increase the RH for your plants during these dry winter months.

Methods to Increase RH for Houseplants:

1. **Misting:** often recommended, though this is not generally effective for long and can lead to disease if water is allowed to sit on leaves.
2. **Pebble trays:** setting the plant's pot on a tray filled with pebbles and water, which will evaporate from the tray and raise the RH. Make sure the bottom of the pot is not submerged to prevent overwatering the soil.
3. **Location:** keep plants away from vents and draft windows where hot or cold air can blow on them. If you have a bathroom or kitchen with adequate light, these rooms may also provide a little more humidity.

4. **Grouping:** position plants together to take advantage of their transpiration as they release moisture into the air around them, forming a slightly-more-humid microclimate with their neighbors



Grouping plants together can help increase the ambient humidity.

5. **Humidifier:** a portable humidifier can be used to increase the RH near plants. This can be especially effective in smaller rooms or other more enclosed areas.
6. **Terrariums/greenhouses/cabinets:** keeping the plants in an enclosed space prevents the moisture in the air around them from dissipating. Some people even put up small walk-in greenhouses in their homes to house their more humidity-sensitive plants.



Placing plants in an enclosed space like a covered aquarium can raise the RH from around 45% to nearly 80%. An inexpensive hygrometer can help you determine the RH near your plants.

I've found that grouping plants together and closing vents in the immediate vicinity to be helpful for a group of Calatheas; smaller specimens enjoy

spending the winter in a large terrarium where the RH can be kept at 70% or higher.

You can invest in an inexpensive hygrometer to gauge humidity around your plants to see how well these methods work. You may not be able to replicate the understory of a rainforest in your living room, but you can make it a little more comfortable for your photosynthesizing friends!

Sources:

1. <https://gardens.si.edu/learn/educational-resources/plant-care-sheets/houseplant-care/>
2. <https://arapahoe.extension.colostate.edu/2020/11/08/humidity-for-health/>
3. <https://pss.uvm.edu/ppp/articles/humidity.html>
4. Capon, Brian. *Botany for Gardeners*, 3rd ed. Portland, Or.: Timber Press 2010.

Editor: Listed below are JCMG's food donations in Johnson County for the 2021 growing season. Receiving organizations included CommUnity Crisis Services and Food Bank, Table to Table, Catholic Worker House, and the North Liberty Community Pantry. I would encourage ALL JCMG to consider growing & donating next year. Can we get this amount doubled or tripled in size?

JCMG 2021 PRODUCE DONATIONS

MG OR SOURCE	Pounds Donated
Plum Grove Garden (Darlene Clausen)	176
Margaret Hibbs	237.5
Linda Schreiber	25
John Weeg	40
Jim Ridenour	40
Jean Holzhammer	32
Jayne Ryder	5.5
Gail Johnson	30
Doug Geraets	632.3
Demonstration Garden (Ann Ruppenkamp)	536.5
Carolyn Murphy	10
GRAND TOTAL	1752.8



MG Birthdays



December 2021

- 1**..... Lavon Yeggy
- 1**..... Helene Donta
- 1**..... Dan Berkowitz
- 2**..... Mary Ann Murray
- 6**..... Kristy Rekers
- 9**..... Michelle Frauenholtz
- 11**..... Emil Rinderspacher
- 12**..... Barbara Robinson
- 19**..... Chris Sedrel
- 24**..... Alice Linhart
- 27**..... Margaret Hibbs
- 27**..... Sharon Rude
- 28**..... Melanie Hauptert
- 30**..... Louise Murray
- 31**..... Doug Geraets

January 2022

- 1**..... Joan Dinnel
- 4**..... Fred Meyer
- 5**..... Jim Ridenour
- 13**..... Deborah Cassell
- 14**..... Jennifer Banta
- 17**..... Gerald Kealey
- 18**..... Karen Martinek
- 21**..... Maggie Elliott
- 22**..... Darlene Clausen
- 23**..... Michael Farran
- 30**..... Nancy Kroeze
- 30**..... Beth Fisher
- 30**..... Katherine Kelly

Project GREEN and the ICPL present ...

Second Sunday 2022 Winter Garden Forums*

Sunday, Jan. 9, 2022

Meeting Room A – 2 P.M.

Free to the Public



Vander Veer Botanical Park. Natasha Sotos, Executive Director of the Friends of Vander Veer, will share information about the 33-acre botanical garden in the Vander Veer Park Historic District of Davenport, Iowa, featuring a conservatory, outdoor gardens, fountains, a nationally-recognized rose garden and hosta glade. It is believed to be one of the first botanical parks west of the Mississippi River ([Wikipedia](#)). Vander Veer Park was established in 1885. The park was built on the old Scott County Fairgrounds land and modeled after New York City's Central Park. Originally named Central Park, the park was renamed after the first secretary of the Davenport Park Board of Commissioners, A.W. Vander Veer in 1912. A

conservatory, music pavilion, and decorative fountains were added after World War I. The park is maintained by a nonprofit organization, The Friends of Vander Veer.

*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 televised on the Iowa City Public Library Cable TV channel, promoted in our newsletter and on Project GREEN's website – www.projectGREEN.org



Grand allée of oak trees





2022 JCMG Continuing Education

Johnson Co. Extension Office
 3109 Old Highway 218 S., Iowa City, IA. 52246
 319-337-2145

Sunday, March 6, 2022
1:30 to 4:30 P.M.

(alternate date March 20, 2022)

The continuing educational sessions are free to MGs;
 MGs from surrounding counties are welcome to participate.

Time	Topic
<p>1:30 P.M.</p>	 <p><i>Perennial Movement Design: The Role of Native Plants</i> - Tyler Baird, Iowa City Superintendent. Parks and Forestry since 2015. A shift from annual to perennials and grasses brings native plants to the forefront to transform Iowa City’s parks and gardens into a green scape sanctuary. This appreciation for Iowa’s native plants has redefined the character of modern urban gardens in Iowa City. Tyler’s approach features perennials that change throughout the seasons producing an effect that nature is flourishing – as the plants grow and patterns evolve. Tyler has incorporated a <i>perennial movement design</i> into the city’s landscape highlighting living, changing spaces advanced by legendary Dutch plant artist and nurseryman Piet Oudolf. A native Iowan, Tyler majored in landscape architecture at Iowa State University and has a M.S. degree from Utah State University. He worked for the National Park Service in the western U.S. and Missouri State Parks before joining the Iowa City staff.</p>
<p>2:30 P.M.</p>	 <p><i>What's Wrong with My Tree?</i> - Mike Anderson, LCMG, 2006. A correct diagnosis of a tree problem is an important first step in saving an unhealthy tree or determining when a tree becomes a hazard and must be removed. Mike’s presentation will cover environmental, bacterial, and insect-related tree issues and provide a systematic approach when examining a tree for possible problems. Mike Anderson, a retired Rockwell engineer, completed Master Gardener training in Linn County in 2006. He is a frequent presenter at the Linn County Winter Gardening Fair and at public libraries in the Linn County area. Mike’s topics include <i>Outstanding Trees of the Midwest</i>, <i>Ash Tree Alternatives</i>, <i>Outstanding Shrubs</i>, <i>Gardening with Color</i>, as well as <i>What’s Wrong with My Tree</i>. He has been a member of the Linn County Extension Council since 2015.</p>
<p>3:30 P.M.</p>	 <p><i>Grow: Johnson County Improves Healthy Food Access</i> – Jason Grimm, Executive Director, and Clare Zabel, Food and Farm Specialist, at Iowa Valley Resource Conservation and Development (IVRCD). Started in 1998, the Iowa Valley RC&D is cultivating change for a sustainable future by completing strategic local work that serves as a catalyst. Their program GROW: Johnson County, at the Johnson County Historic Poor Farm, delivers a just food system by improving healthy food access through charitable food production and hands-on education. The program was launched in 2015 and has freely distributed over 130,000 pounds of produce to 15 agencies in Johnson County. Jason has been with IVRCD since 2009 and has degrees in Landscape Architecture and Environmental Studies from Iowa State University. Clare Zabel leads the daily production activities for the program and provides technical assistance to other local growers. Clare grew up on a small dairy farm in Minnesota, and moved to Iowa 10 years ago. She obtained her undergraduate degree in Communication Studies from The University of Iowa and a Master’s Degree in Agronomy from Iowa State University.</p>

MG Upcoming Events/Volunteer Opportunities

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

December 2021/January 2022

Eastern Iowa Bird Watchers/IC Birds

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

Sunday, Dec. 19, all day

Iowa City Christmas Bird Count. Observation and feeder watch. Check in with the Iowa City Bird Club for more details as they are published. Learn more at <https://iowacitybirdclub.org/christmas-counts/>.

Project GREEN

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

Sunday, Jan. 9, 2 P.M.

Second Sunday 2022 Winter Garden Forums. Iowa City Public Library, Meeting Room A. See featured article for details.

Trees Forever

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

Tuesday, Dec. 7, 5:30 to 7:30 P.M.

Grow Your Tree Canopy. Polk City Community Center, 309 Van Dorn Street, Polk City. Trees Forever and partners are excited to offer a pre-holiday “Grow Your Tree Canopy Workshop” for members of tree boards, tree committees, parks & recreation departments/boards, master gardeners, Treekeepers, the general public, and lovers of trees. We will be unveiling our Top 10 ways to grow your community forest canopy.

Topics include grant programs for communities, FEMA disaster declarations, benefits of trees, community roadside plans, dealing with Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) and more. This is a fantastic opportunity to learn about the green infrastructure we so often take for granted and how we can make it more resilient for the future. Lite holiday snacks provided.

This is a free event but registration is required for space and snack needs. Register at <https://treesforever.org/event/grow-your-tree-canopy/>.

Thursday, Dec. 9, 8:30 A.M. to 2:30 P.M.

Our Woodland Legacy Symposium: What Trees Teach Us. Hotel at Kirkwood, 7725 Kirkwood Blvd SW, Cedar Rapids or Online Join us for the 2021 Our Woodland Legacy Symposium to hear from our world-class speakers, authors and experts. Discover “What Trees Teach Us” for both our personal and community growth. Don’t miss this opportunity to interact and network with environmentally-minded peers and organizations.

We are excited to present our live, virtual keynote speaker, Dr. Suzanne Simard, author of Finding the Mother Tree and professor of Forest Ecology at the University of British Columbia. Additional speakers include Julie Guimond, Urban Forestry Lead from the City of Calgary and Jeff Speck of Jeff Speck & Associates, who will discuss ongoing research in urban forestry and replanting practices following natural disasters.

Two participation options are offered: In-person (\$75) or online (\$50). Register at <https://treesforever.org/event/symposium/>.

Additional Resources/Event Opportunities

100 Grannies

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

Backyard Abundance

<http://backyardabundance.org/events>

Bur Oak Land Trust

<https://www.facebook.com/BurOakLandTrust/events>

Iowa State Extension

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

Johnson County Conservation

<http://www.johnson-county.com/conservation>

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

Johnson County-ISU Extension

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

Linn County-ISU Extension

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

New Pioneer Coop

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

Seed Savers

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



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Mail can be sent to:

*Johnson County Extension Service
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