



Johnson County Master Gardener

THYMES

June 2021

MG Steering Committee Meeting

Wednesday, June 9, 7 P.M., virtual Zoom meeting will continue for the near future. Interested MGs are invited to participate—contact Shannon for 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 **July/August** issue by **Friday, June 25**.

Plant Sale & Flea Market * May 7, 2022

BY EMIL RINDERSPACHER



After a two-year hiatus due to COVID-19, the 13th annual JCMG Plant Sale & Flea Market is set for Saturday, May 7, 2022, 8:30 A.M. to noon. Proceeds from the sale support JCMG programs and operations, 4-H awards and Kirkwood Horticulture scholarships.

This is a big event and we're going to need all JCMGs and interns to help in some way. We'll have more information in the July *Thymes*. If you have questions, contact Emil Rinderspacher at emil-rinderspacher@uiowa.edu.

Secret Octagonal Barn: Opportunities for Master Gardeners

BY DEB CASSELL



The barn—built in 1883—is unique in its octagonal shape and is on the National Register of Historic Places. The barn site is used for parties, recitals and weddings with all fees going towards the restoration of the barn.

For its location (5750 Osage St SE, West Liberty) see map below ↴



I have volunteered to help with its restoration since last summer and realized the potential for

MGs, who wish to develop projects such as creating period kitchen and flower gardens or have the space to develop a large area for growing vegetables. Any project would mean starting from scratch.



There are two areas, shown in above photo on either side of the concrete which looked ideal at first glance, but the concrete slab is cracked below a few inches of soil. These areas could be used by removing the concrete or by building up the sides and filling with dirt.

Alternatively, a large vegetable growing area could be created in the area adjacent to this with water from a red water hydrant in front of the shed.



To be frank, this is not for the faint-hearted. the barn is 10 miles from the centre of Iowa City and on a gravel road. It is, however, an opportunity to design and create a new project, whilst working in an interesting and rural environment

The barn is open for visitors every day, however for those interested in visiting the barn either out of curiosity or with a view to exploring its potential for MG activity they could email me: debcase11@gmail.com and a tour with the owner Richard Tyler can be arranged.

Three Frozen Kings

BY SHARON RUDE

When I was young, every spring, my mother would mention the Three Frozen Kings. All I knew is we had to wait for the three frozen kings to pass before we could plant anything. Who or what were the three frozen kings?

Czech legend reveals the three kings or saints (Pankrac on May 12, Servac on May 13, and Bonifac on May 14) were frozen when the temperatures dropped while they were fishing at sea. On May 15, St. Zofie came along with a kettle of hot water to thaw out the three frozen kings. This legend traveled to Iowa with the immigrants who found the Iowa climate similar to their Czech homeland. To translate the story into Iowa's Spring planting season, we basically need to wait to plant anything tender which could be damaged or killed by a frost or freeze until we have had three consecutive overnight lows below the freezing temperature mark.

As Master Gardeners, we are aware of Iowa's average last frost date, which is typically May 15. Often times, it is safe to put tender plants outside and in the ground after Mother's Day or May 15. This year, Iowa experienced three continuous nights of below freezing temps on April 20, 21, and 22 (overnight low temps of 27°, 25°, and 29° F respectively). By the time you read this, most of you will have all of your spring planting done, and safely so as to not have to worry about the Three Frozen Kings. Keep them in mind each year as part of your Spring gardening plans.

Weeds in My Yard (continued from May Thymes)

BY JOEL WELLS

Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*)



Garlic Mustard with glove to give perspective of size

When I first started to find out what was growing in my yard I noted that Garlic Mustard was growing in abundance. Since it is quite prolific I have had a chance to see it **every year!** Garlic Mustard releases a chemical into the soil called sinigrin that kills fungi that other plants need to grow. The fungi help the plants extract nutrients. Garlic Mustard not only displaces native plants but by removing the fungi it also weakens them.



First year Garlic Mustard leaves



Geranium leaves

Distinguishing Features: First year Garlic Mustard leaves have the same shape of some geranium leaves. Garlic Mustard has small rounded green leaves with scalloped edges and embossed veins. It gets its name by the garlic odor it produces when its leaves are crushed. During its first year, garlic mustard leaves are rounder, take on a rosette formation, and are closer to the ground. The second year, the leaves become more triangular, heart

shaped and grow up the flowering stem. The small white flowers appear in the spring.



Garlic Mustard just getting started



Second year Garlic Mustard leaves

Control of the plant: The best way to get rid of Garlic Mustard is to pull it up after a rain (to ensure the roots are pulled), bag it, and dispose of it.

An **effective** way of controlling the plant is by spraying the plant when it is small and when there is a great amount of it with a herbicide like Roundup or products containing the active ingredients glyphosate, or 2,4-D.

1. <https://www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/where-we-work/united-states/indiana/stories-in-indiana/garlic-mustard/>
2. <http://goodoak.com/info/weeds/index.html>
Very good PDFs about all weeds.

[Editor: for another point of view on leaving garlic mustard alone see <https://www.northcountrypublicradio.org/news/story/43550/20210409/donothing-about-invasive-plants>]

Project GREEN's Open Gardens Weekend: Register Your Garden

BY CINDY PARSONS



Project GREEN wants your garden for the Open Gardens event this year. Anyone who enjoys their garden and would like to share it with the community can participate! Admission will be free for visitors to experience private gardens throughout Iowa City and Coralville, whether a tiny plant-filled patio or an intricately landscaped yard. Project GREEN's Open Gardens Weekend is scheduled for **July 10-11, 2021** (Saturday, 5 to 8 P.M.; Sunday 10 A.M. to 1 P.M.).

Please consider participating in this delightful and inspiring event with these easy steps:

1. Sign up online at www.projectgreen.org or call 319-430-6649 to request a mailed application
2. Pick up a yard sign before the event
3. Place the yard sign in front of your garden and enjoy chatting with visitors

Register online at www.projectgreen.org by Sunday, June 20.

Learn more about Open Gardens Weekend at www.projectgreen.org

If you have questions, contact us at iowacityprojectgreen@gmail.com

Also... work is continuing on the Project GREEN Gardens at the Ashton House, 820 Park Road, Iowa City. Volunteers meet on Mondays (weather permitting) from 9 to 11 A.M. for a time of gardening and camaraderie. The more the merrier! If you are interested, email dlallen16@hotmail.com for details.

MG Project Updates



Ecumenical Towers Garden

(Project Leader Michael Hesseltine)

This year is turning out to be a one of fine tuning the gardens and a renewal of previous efforts. Our connections with building residents is turning their feedback into action to update the spring planting scheme. The priorities are to reduce some older plantings to make way for new cultivars with an emphasis on adding more color and variety with a focus on perennials. Annuals, unless donated, will not be planted.

And speaking of donations, I would like to thank MGs for their contributions of time and plant offerings. Downtown City Gardens provided day lilies of varying colors to contrast with the orange variety that occupy one of our gardens. The DCG group not only donated the plants but arrived “in force” to help plant. All the lilies have settled in nicely and my hope is they adjust and bloom this summer.

The ET gardens have also benefitted this year from donated plants from the Iowa Raptor Center. This group is helping transform those gardens by digging and removing nonnative plants. Catmint, penstemon, Siberian iris and coneflowers were donated and planted at ET on May 16. Also new this year is a butterfly bush, donated dahlias and

there are plans to add a stone path. These changes will all be firsts for ET gardens.

Anyone interested in volunteering should contact Michael Hesselstine at michael-hesselstine@uiowa.edu. Our site volunteers are welcome to weed at any time that is convenient for them. Invasive vines and creeping Charlie will keep you busy! **The ET project is seeking a co-leader—let Michael know if you are interested.**

Downtown City Gardens

(Project Leader Linda Schreiber)

Spring arrived a little early this year and mocked our enthusiasm by withdrawing pleasant weather for near-freezing temperatures to delay planting until mid-May.

In late May, waves of feathery, light green Larkspur foliage greeted motorists at the west end of Old Capitol Car Park. By fall, the colors in this garden will change to gold and green when a variety of sunflowers will be in full bloom. Right now, purple-leaf cannas are stretching up to reach new heights. The mulch, applied by Iowa City crews, around Old Capitol Car Park will hold the moisture and help control weeds.

Another very generous gift of annuals are boosting color in several DCG gardens:

- Northside - begonias, coleus and bee balm
- Old Capitol Car Park - Sea holly, dianthus, Ox Eye and other sunflowers
- Melrose Avenue - (Dottie Ray Gardens) – pentas, Russian statice and alyssum

Soon purple hyacinth beans will climb string guides from the Secret Garden in the Dubuque Street Car Park's lower level.

This week, Melrose Avenue is looking spectacular with a showy spread of iris and peonies—though additional rain may beat the beauty down. The small Artic Fire dogwoods came through the winter looking good and are leafing out nicely.

We are enjoying wonderful assistance from a group dedicated group of MG volunteers who are helping plant and maintain DCG.

Oaknoll Garden Project

(Project Co-leaders: Marylou Gay, Vicki Siefers, Deb Cassell)



The first daffodils peeking up at Carolyn Boerner's garden on Benton St.

The Oaknoll gardeners are back in 2021 and the residents are all vaccinated and eager to be back in their gardens. This year there are 13 gardeners participating and one new area—the courtyard in the health center is being cared for by Ann Ruppenkamp. I am still hoping to find help for Ann but she is enjoying this sheltered and attractive area.

We were not able to have our spring gathering due to not being able to use the gathering space indoors, yet, but the outdoor gardens are bustling with activity. Some of the Master Gardeners continued to help during the pandemic with social distancing outdoors and that has been greatly appreciated by the residents who get so much enjoyment from their gardens.

Plum Grove

(Project Leaders: Lavon Yeggy, Darlene Clausen, Carolyn Murphy)

Friendly's Vegetable and Herb Garden

Planting has begun and new mulch is covering the paths. When weather permits, donated tomatoes, peppers, and eggplant will be planted. Cucumbers will be added to the herb and salad bed. Three sisters corn, beans, and squash will be planted in mounds. Compost turning and maintenance will begin soon. Anyone who wants to work can come on Saturday and Tuesday mornings at 9:00 A.M.; additional work times can be added. Contact Darlene

Clausen at 319-400-5299 or by email at [clausendarlene7@gmail](mailto:clausendarlene7@gmail.com) if you want to help.

Wildflower Garden

We were fortunate to have five to seven volunteers several times in the wildflower garden, before all the rain. We cleared paths, created new trails, and prepped areas for planting new plants including Mexican Hat, Butterfly Milkweed, common milkweed, and lobelia. We have started putting down mulch. Right now, we will work Tuesday mornings and some Saturdays. We've had interest in working an evening, so please let Lavon know what works for you: 319-330-0952 or lavon.yeggy@outlook.com.

Grandma's Flower Garden

The spring flowers are looking fantastic with all the rain. This garden is divided into four sections with a leader or two for each. If you are interested in helping in one or the whole garden, let me know. We do need help weeding, mulching the path, and a small paint job. Contact Carolyn Murphy at 319-541-7079 or candmmurphy@aol.com for details if you can help.

The Questor's Rose garden (next to flower garden) is looking great as well. The roses survived the winter and are budding nicely, however, this area could use some TLC if someone would like to take that on (clean up brick, mulch, and prune roses).

The Plum Grove director has informed us the grounds will not be open to the public this summer (as of now) except for several scheduled Lucas Neighborhood events in August and pre-scheduled group tours. As soon as we find out details for the Lucas Neighborhood events, we would like to schedule garden guides and offer produce to visitors. We will send out an email when we know details.

Due to public and volunteer safety concerns we cancelled both the Taste of Plum Grove in July and the Heirloom Tomato Taste late August as both serve food. We are all disappointed but feel it was the safest decision.

Butterfly House

(Co-leaders Carolyn & Mike Murphy)

The Johnson County Fair will happen this year: Sunday, July 25 to Wednesday, July 28. Lucy Hershberger from Forever Green, Mike, and I are in discussions deciding how we can safely run the Butterfly House. We have been asked and replied to the Fair Committee we will have an exhibit although it may be different. If we do not use the hoop house (safe distancing recommendation will be a factor), we will use popup tents with display tables to spread the visitors out and keep some distance for volunteers. Fairs should be fun and "educational." We will do our best to figure this out. Any suggestions are welcome.

Stay tuned for a request to help! I will send out an email detailing the hours and times (as soon as I can). We appreciate all who can volunteer their time!

If any of you have butterflies, moths (or other insects), plants, or other interesting items to contribute to the displays, let us know: Carolyn & Mike Murphy at 319-541-7079 or candmmurphy@aol.com

Attended Displays

(Co-leaders: Chris Sedrel, Jackie Wellborn)

Most recently have done two events (May 1 and 8) with Backyard Abundance. We now have two duplicate display boxes with all publications we offer to the public. We are looking to purchase a foldable display table for use at events. To volunteer contact Jackie at jkwellborn@gmail.com or 319-512-8382.

Iowa Raptor Project

(Project Co-Leaders Ann Tvedte and Alice Linhart)

In early May on a Saturday morning, a group of JCMGs met at the Raptor Center to work in the gardens for the first time since 2019. However, this gathering was different. Instead of putting flowers and plants in the ground we were digging to relocate plants.

You may recall that the Iowa Raptor Project (IRP) will go in a new direction with the management change that occurred in 2020. The Raptor Center which is now called the IRP is located in Macbride Nature Recreation Area (MNRA) and owned by the University of Iowa. This area consists of approximately 500 acres of land in three parcels. IRP is part of the largest, an approximately 300-acre parcel. The properties in the MNRA are remnant oak savanna prairie which has never been disturbed. The MNRA wants to recreate the prairie by removing foreign plants and only propagate native plants found on this property. Any plant not native to MNRA property is undesirable.

With this goal in mind, the IRP wanted to remove all of the plants in the Hummingbird and Butterfly gardens as they are not native to the property. Enter JCMGs to rescue the plants!



Ann, Alice, Michael H., Chris P., Beth, Pat Q., Shannon, and three interns: Nancy, Michele, Kristy dug and dug and filled up three trucks with plants that went to the Extension office for project leaders to use for their projects as well as MGs adopting for their home gardens. We relocated mints, iris, *Pentstemon*, bluebells, wild indigo, *Amsonia* (blue star flower), sages, coneflowers, Solomon seal, trumpet vine, Columbine, Russian sage, milkweeds, prickly pear cactus, *Liatris*, to name a few. No additional digs are planned at this time.



Alice Linhart comments: Working at the gardens at the Raptor Center has been a great joy of my MG life. The new direction is a wonderful opportunity, especially for native plant enthusiasts, to create new gardens using all native plants that demonstrate just how beautiful native Iowa plants are. I have no doubt that these gardens will continue to be a popular destination for all of us to enjoy in the years to come just as they were in the past.

Firefighters Memorial

(Project Leader Barb Schintler)

Master Gardeners planted the Firefighters Memorial in Coralville on Wednesday, May 12. We planted 288 4 ½-inch pots of Supertunia® Vista Bubblegum and 36 pots of *Gomphrena* 'Ping Pong'. The gardens look fantastic and it will be a great setting for the annual memorial celebration held in mid-June.

Kudos to MG volunteers Anne Atkins, Margaret Hibbs, Sue Kloos, Steve Lyons and Vicki Siefers.

Speakers Bureau

(Leader Jackie Wellborn)

Presentations have been delivered virtually during the pandemic. Dorothy Fowles is working with Atrium Village to do a virtual flower arranging class (materials will be provided to the residents). If interested in becoming involved contact Jackie at jkwelborn@gmail.com or 319-512-8382.

Coralville Schoolhouse Gardens

(Project co-leaders Cindy Parsons, Vicki Siefers and Bonnie Penno)

Master Gardeners have been busy at the historic 1876 Coralville Schoolhouse Gardens at 310 5th Street in Coralville. Work sessions are held most Saturday mornings from 9 to 11 A.M., weather permitting.



Project co-leaders Cindy Parsons, Vicki Siefers and Bonnie Penno)

Despite the ongoing battle with Canadian thistles, it is a scenic and serene place to work. It is also an ideal spot where MGs can stop by at their convenience to pull a bucketful of weeds on their own—any time! For questions, or to be added to our group email for this project, contact Cindy Parsons at cparsons@icialaw.com or 319-400-7179.

Hortline

(Project Leader Ester Retish)

Mary and Carl Hensley continue to be regular volunteers—fielding and answering questions by e-mail.

Just in the past few weeks Hortline has extended our operation and MG Hortline volunteers are coming into the office and answering questions on the phone. It feels good to be opening up slowly! If you have interest in volunteering or just want to see what the Hortline is all about contact Ester Retish at eretish@mchsi.com or 319-351-5011.

Demonstration Garden

(Co-leaders Sharon Jeter, Chris Sedrel, Ann Ruppenkamp)

The garden is progressing well this Spring. We have planted a lot of cold crops and will be planting tomatoes and zinnias. Work has been ongoing to establish a cutting garden. Volunteer support has been very good with work sessions on Tuesday P.M. Any MG or intern interested in helping out contact Sharon Jeter at sharonjeter@gmail.com or 319-631-2148.

 MG Birthdays 	
June 2021	
1	Jane Balvanz
4	Megan Garrels
5	Elaine Martin
6	Mary Hensley
9	Craig Wilbanks
21	Charles Mills
24	Vicki Siefers
26	Katy Carlson
27	Patricia Quiles

MG Upcoming Events/Volunteer Opportunities

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

June 2021

Backyard Abundance

<http://backyardabundance.org/events>

Wednesday, June 2 and Saturday, June 5 and June 12.

Feed a Bee Series. Support your buzzing friends by establishing pollinator plants in your yard. Three “Feed a Bee” events will be held at the public gardens Backyard Abundance maintains through their Garden Guru program.

- June 2 at 5 P.M.: Wetherby Park Edible Forest: [Learn more and register.](#)
- June 5 at 10 A.M.: James Alan McPherson (Creekside) Park: [Learn more and register.](#)
- June 12 at 10 A.M.: Edible Classroom: [Learn more and register.](#)

Free seeds and plants available while supplies last. We’ll also provide free publications and ideas to help your pollinator patches get off to a good start. See details at Facebook event pages linked above.

Bur Oak Land Trust

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

Tuesday, June 8, 3 to 4 P.M

Thinking about going solar? Join us for a virtual Solar Power Hour from the comfort of your couch! Residents, farmers and business owners throughout Linn & Johnson Counties have an opportunity to participate in Grow Solar Linn and Johnson counties, a grassroots program combining volume purchasing with community education to make solar more accessible and affordable.

Regardless of where you live in these two counties, you can participate in any of the free informational Solar Power Hours. You'll learn about the basics of solar, its financial implications for a household, and how the solar group buy program works. After the session, get a free, no-obligation site assessment from installer, Eagle Point Solar. Learn more and register at <https://www.facebook.com/events/270151118140609/>.

Linn County-ISU Extension

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

Wednesday, June 2 and 23, and Thursday, June 24.

Preserve the Taste of Summer. Online. Preserving your own foods can be a lot quicker and easier than you might think. It's a great way to have delicious, local food all year long. An introductory course and workshops offer you the opportunity to learn safe food preservation techniques.

- Wednesday, June 2 at 6:30 P.M.: Salsa Making Basics
- Wednesday, June 23 at 6:30 P.M.: Preserve the Taste of Summer 101
- Thursday, June 24 at 6:30 P.M.: Jam Making Basics.

Learn more and register at <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/humansciences/preserve-taste-summer>.

Project GREEN

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

Sunday, June 20

Deadline to register your garden for Project GREEN's Open Gardens Weekend. See article in this issue of *Thymes* for details.

Mondays, 9 to 11 A.M.

Volunteer with Project GREEN Gardens. Ashton House, 820 Park Road in Iowa City. See article in this issue for details.

Trees Forever

<http://www.treesforever.org/Events>

Tuesdays, June 1, 15, 29, 12 to 1 P.M.

Tree Chat. Online. Tree Chat is your opportunity to get up to speed on all things trees and forests. This informal Q&A is here to answer all your questions about trees, prairies, seedlings and everything under the sun! A different topic will be featured each session. Zoom link:

<https://zoom.us/j/96579008642?pwd=MXhRSUVyQk8yZkE3ZkxnNlNHbVB3Zz09>

Wednesday, June 2, 12 to 1 P.M.

Emerald Ash Borer: An Update with USDA APHIS. Online. Emerald Ash Borer is an invasive pest that kills Ash trees. Join Trees Forever and Tom Vorce with USDA APHIS to learn about the status of EAB, how to control it, and management techniques. This is a free webinar geared towards local community leaders, homeowners and concerned citizens. Free. Register at <http://www.treesforever.org/EABwebinar>.

Wednesday, June 9, 12 to 1 P.M.

Creating a Backyard Buzz. Online. What can you plant in your backyard to create pollinator habitat? Trees Forever helps answer this question in a webinar aimed at homeowners. Not everyone has a few acres to dedicate to pollinator habitat, but “islands” of habitat throughout our communities are vital for a sustainable future. Find out you can help. Register at <http://www.treesforever.org/BackyardBuzz>.

Tuesdays, June 8, July 13, August 10, September 14, 6 to 8 P.M.

Stewards of the Beautiful Land 2021. Stewards of the Beautiful Land is a four-part course that aims to educate participants regarding Iowa's native ecosystem, native plant ID, management techniques and planting opportunities along roadside and trail corridors. Participants will be encouraged and supported as they engage in advocacy efforts and optional on-site walkabouts. Cost: \$25. Learn more and register at <http://www.treesforever.org/stewards> . Registration closes June 7.

Additional Resources/Event Opportunities**100 Grannies**

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

Eastern Iowa Bird Watchers/IC Birds

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

New Pioneer Coop

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

Seed Savers

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



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Mail can be sent to:

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