



Johnson County Master Gardener

THYMES

MG Steering Committee Meeting

Wednesday, Oct. 14, 7 P.M.; virtual meeting via WebEx 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.

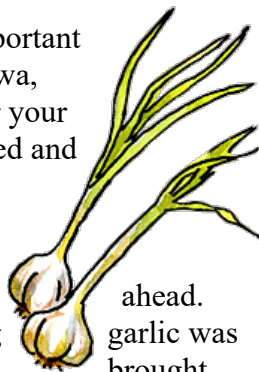
Please send news, volunteer opportunities, stories, pictures, gardening book reviews, etc., for the issue by **Friday, Oct. 23**.

Growing Garlic

BY LINDA SCHREIBER AND DOUG GERAETS

Garlic is easy to grow and an important ingredient in many recipes. In Iowa, garlic is planted in the fall—after your summer crops have been harvested and you have freed up space in the garden. You won't harvest this crop until next summer so be sure to take some time to plan

My first experience planting garlic was from JCMG Joyce Miller who brought huge organic garlic bulbs to MG class. That was my first lesson—you can't plant garlic purchased from the grocery store because it's often treated to prevent sprouting.



Types of Garlic

Garlic (*Allium sativum*) is a member of the onion family. There are two categories (or subspecies) of garlic. *Hardneck* garlic produces a stiff stem that grows up through the center of the bulb. It has a sharper flavor and is hardier, making it a good choice for Iowa's cold winters. Hardneck produces a flower stalk (also called a scape which is edible), and the bulb may not store well because it has a tendency to develop roots or dry out within a few months after harvest. *Softneck* garlic doesn't have a stiff central stem and doesn't produce a seed stalk. You'll find this garlic in most grocery stores. Its flavor is relatively mild. Softneck is more productive and has a longer storage life—about 6 to 8 months. It's best grown in areas with mild winters; and it's the type to grow if you want to braid your garlic after harvesting.

Steps for Planting Garlic

Garlic grows best in full sun in soils that are well-drained and high in organic matter. Fertility is also important as garlic has a moderate to high demand for nitrogen fertilizer. Drought or excessively wet conditions will reduce your yield.

- Plant garlic about four to six weeks before the ground freezes.
- Prepare the soil by loosening it to a depth of at least 8-inches and mix in a slow-release organic fertilizer.
- Prior to planting, break the garlic heads into individual cloves, leaving the papery covering intact.
- Plant cloves 3- to 4-inches deep, 6-inches apart with pointy ends up.
- Water gently and cover the bed with a 4- to 6-inches of straw. The cover allows

the soil to stay warm so the newly-planted cloves can establish roots before the ground freezes. Sometimes green shoots will form in fall. That's okay. They will grow again in the spring; pull mulch off the growing shoots once spring temperatures are consistently above 60 degrees.

- Keep the bed weeded and watered throughout spring and summer.

If you've planted a Hardneck garlic variety, trim the flower scapes (my second lesson), the long, slender flower stems, before the plant flowers. You can use the scapes to flavor your recipes by sautéing. Removing the scapes will improve the garlic flavor.

Harvesting & Storing Garlic

Usually garlic is ready to harvest in late July. If you harvest your garlic too soon, the cloves will be small and underdeveloped. If you wait too long, the heads will separate which makes them susceptible to dry out (which means they won't last as long). From experience the best indicator that garlic is ready for harvest is when the bottom 3 or 4 leaves have begun to brown and wither. Clean the soil away from the bulb and roots. Next, garlic bulbs should be laid out or hung in a covered area away from sun to dry completely (3 to 4 weeks) before trimming the stalk. Store in a basement or garage that doesn't freeze. Ideal storage temperature is 40° to 65 degrees at 60 per cent humidity (or as close to this as possible).



Note: Planting garlic in your garden (unfortunately) does not keep deer or vampires away.

South District Adds Cheer To Broadway Street

Master Gardeners assist with project

South District Neighborhood Association (SDNA) spokesperson Angie Jordon dreams of adding vibrancy and color to her neighborhood while empowering residents. SDNA's vision included a mural along the east side of the Pepperwood Plaza shopping area. In June, that wish became a reality.

SDNA's vision also included rejuvenating and adding gardens along the Broadway Street mural site so she reached out to Iowa City Neighborhood Outreach Coordinator Marcia Bollinger who in turn approached Master Gardener volunteers. As SDNA discussed plans with MGs Sharon Jeter and Linda Schreiber, Angie explained that adding amenities to the district would inspire and bring joy to the residents. Ultimately SDNA hoped to see flower gardens all along Broadway Street, from Cross Park Avenue to Sandusky Drive.

The big picture, Angie said would be completed over time with a team effort.

The gardening partnership, created two years ago with a donation of cannas and zinnia seeds, was expanded when Linda received a large donation of Stella de Oro daylilies from a neighbor that she matched with her own re-blooming Purple d' Oro. In an email to Angie, Linda asked if it was time to add new gardens along Broadway.

With permission granted, MGs agreed to prep the gardens by removing turf and rototilling two new 15-foot garden beds. Doug Geraets and Chuck Mills did the heavy lifting to get everything ready for Connie Goeb and Linda to plant the donated daylilies before the fall equinox.



Spray-painting borders of flower beds, followed by sod removal and tilling.



Linda and Chuck completing first flower bed on Broadway Street.



Doug and Chuck working on new flower beds.

With the new plantings in place, the neighborhood association recruited neighborhood children to spread mulch, donated by Faith Academy, and water the new gardens.



Angie and neighborhood kids mulching and watering new plantings.

Thanks go to volunteers at partner organizations assisting SDNA including Faith Academy and Parkview East campus, Backyard Abundance, United Way and Hawkeye Athletes (for helping with the initial planting), Iowa City/Johnson County Moms Demand Action, City of Iowa City and Johnson County Master Gardeners.

Multiple partners and many hands made light work bringing good cheer and more blooms to the South District neighborhood.

Photos courtesy of SDNA and JCMG.

Fall Master Gardener Training Classes

FROM SHANNON BIELICKE

Looking for education hours? The Fall MG Training ISU Webinar list is now available. *If you would like to view the web-based videos please email Shannon for the links.* You can also find new educational videos recently added to the Iowa MG YouTube Channel www.youtube.com/channel/UCoyB28Aj3qOovjpwnkSiLBg.

Typical Face to Face sessions for the Fall MG Training are being conducted virtually and due to limited capacity in that setting we are restricting participation to the class members and presenters. We have hope that if the topics are successful we will be able to utilize them in the future for a larger audience. Please direct any questions or requests for web-based video links to Shannon Bielicke, bielicke@iastate.edu, 319-337-2145.

Demonstration Garden Fence Work

BY DOUG GERAETS

Per marching orders from Sharon Jeter, Chuck Mills and I worked last week to complete the west side white vinyl fence in the Demonstration Garden. It was a challenge as the ground in that area slopes up from north to south.

After some trial (and error) we were able to figure out a best way to “step up” the fence as it went north to south. Alas, we were one fence section short of completing the task when we ran out of fencing supplies!



Laying out the new fence before getting started.



New fence installed except for last section to be placed on the right.

There will either be a 20-inch opening in the fence at the southwest corner, a gated opening in the southwest corner, or we will close the fence all the way to the corner. Stay tuned!



MG Birthdays



October 2020

2	.....	Muriel Naumann
3	.....	Jeff Baker
4	.....	Kristin Ho
5	.....	Janice Hining
6	.....	Betty Kelly
13	.....	Ramona McGurk
25	.....	Connie Funk
30	.....	Marge Jensen

Gardening Tools Highlighted as “My Favorite Gardening Tool” in *Thymes*

Tool Image	Tool Name	Used for...	MG Who Championed
	<i>the</i> Trake®	Dig or plant bulbs; weeding in tight spaces	Linda Schreiber
	Japanese Weeding Sickle	Digging, hoeing, and weeding	Sharon Jeter
	Fiskars® Pruning Tool	Deadheading, trimming, shaping and other quick snips	Alice Linhart
	Ames® Planter's Pal Hand Tool	Planting, transplanting, weeding, moving & leveling soil	Sharon Rude
	Reciprocating saw (various brands)	Digging and dividing plants; trimming & cutting small trees & roots	Chris Sedrel
	The Basic Garden Tool	Digs, hoes, and weeds	Chris Sedrel

MG Upcoming Events/Volunteer Opportunities

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

October 2020

100 Grannies

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

Monday, Oct. 5, 4 to 5:30 P.M.

Film Series: Rollback plus discussion. An Assault Against the Earth. Zoom (Iowa City Senior Center virtual). Contact: 100granniesiowacity@gmail.com.

Monday, October 12, 4 P.M. to 5:30 P.M.

Film Series: Plastic Wars. Zoom (Iowa City Senior Center virtual). Contact: 100granniesiowacity@gmail.com.

Tuesday, Oct. 27, 7to 8 P.M.

Regular Monthly Meeting. Now being held via Zoom. Members: Please look for email from 100grannies for details. Contact: 100granniesiowacity@gmail.com.

Backyard Abundance

<http://backyardabundance.org/events>

Fridays, Oct. 2 and 16, 10:30 to 11:30 A.M.

Garden Guru at the Edible Classroom. Facebook Live Video. Enjoy your lunch with a virtual visit to the Edible Classroom.

- October 2: Garlic Planting Party
- October 16: Putting Your Garden to Bed

Visit the Edible Classroom at Robert A Lee Community Center after each event to see what was done, pick up free publications, tend the garden and harvest food. Please make sure to follow social distancing and hygiene guidelines. Link to event details:

<https://www.facebook.com/events/316138866021331/>.

Sunday, Oct. 4, 3 to 3:30 P.M.

Design a Pollinator Garden. Facebook Live Event. Support your buzzing friends by designing and planning a native pollinator garden that will emerge next spring. Join from home for a Facebook Live chat with Fred Meyer of Backyard Abundance.

You will learn how to:

- Identify the right spot for your pollinator garden.
- Size your garden for success.
- Select a good native prairie seed mix for your patch.
- Incorporate plants for cut flowers, teas and medicinal herbs.

Pollinator habitat will be created in several areas at Wetherby Edible Forest. Some areas will emphasize plants for cut flowers and herbal teas. View the design:

<https://www.backyardabundance.org/wetherby>. Link to event details:

<https://www.facebook.com/events/313988816370990>.

Thursday, Oct. 15, 9:30 A.M. to 3:30 P.M.

Wholeness and Healing in the Prairie. Our Lady of the Prairie Retreat, 2664 145th Avenue, Wheatland, IA. Treat yourself to a walk in nature. We invite you to walk through the prairie in a slow, relaxed way that helps still your mind, enjoy the present moment, recharge and reduce stress. Playful, exploratory activities will deepen your relationship with nature to enhance personal wellness while simultaneously benefiting the health of the land.

The event is \$20 per person which includes a meal. Participants of all mobility levels are welcome and will be accommodated during this slow stroll. See additional details and register at

<https://www.chmiowa.org/news-and-events/calendar/event/277>.

Wednesdays, Oct. 14 and 28, 4:30 to 5:30 P.M.

Garden Guru at Creekside Park Edible Forest. Facebook Live Video. Learn about Iowa City's newest edible forest in a virtual format.

- October 14: Leaf Blanketing and Yoga Nidra for the Garden
- October 28: Tree/Shrub Protection for Winter

Visit Creekside Park Edible Forest after each event to see what was done, pick-up free publications, tend the garden and harvest food. Please follow social distancing and hygiene guidelines to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Link to event details:

<https://www.facebook.com/events/963068434142476/>.

Sunday, Oct. 18, 3 to 3:30 P.M.

Establish a Pollinator Garden. Facebook Live Event. Support your buzzing friends by establishing a native pollinator garden that will emerge next spring. Join from home for a Facebook Live chat with Fred Meyer of Backyard Abundance.

You will learn how to:

- Prepare a patch of turfgass for seeding.
- Prepare an existing garden bed for seeding.
- Properly spread native prairie seed.

Pollinator habitat will be created in several areas at Wetherby Edible Forest. Some areas will emphasize plants for cut flowers and herbal teas. View the design:

<https://www.backyardabundance.org/wetherby>. Link to event details:

<https://www.facebook.com/events/939241643206408>.

Eastern Iowa Bird Watchers/IC Birds

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

Thursday, Oct. 15, 6:45 to 9 P.M.

Bird Club Meeting via Zoom. IOU members Karen Viste-Sparkman and Stuart Sparkman will present “Columbia: Birding the Northern Andes.” Login details sent via email to ICBC club members.

Johnson County Conservation

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

salgreen@co.johnson.ia.us

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

Ongoing through Dec. 14.

Storybook Trail (Self-Guided). F.W. Kent Conservation Education Center, 2048 Highway 6 NW, Oxford, IA. Johnson County Conservation has featured a self-guided Storybook Trail for families with young children to enjoy this summer and fall. The trail starts at the Conservation Education Center in Kent Park and wraps around a half-mile limestone surfaced trail. Four books will be featured this fall season. The books and dates featured are:

- Hiking Day: Sept. 21 – Oct. 12
- Leaf Jumpers: Oct. 12 – Nov. 2
- Bear Says Thanks: Nov. 2 – Nov. 30
- Hibernation Station: Nov. 30 – Dec. 14

Though this is created as an event, this is a self-guided trail. You can come out to hike it any day of the week, any time of day that works for you. The event is created to help remind you when a new book is posted. Details at <https://www.facebook.com/events/357607025278718>.

Linn County-ISU Extension

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

Thursday, Oct. 8, Monday, Oct. 12, Thursday, Oct. 22, Wednesday, Oct. 28, various times.

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. Due to COVID-19 concerns, two sessions will be offered online:

- **Totally Tomatoes:** Online class discussing home food preservation of tomatoes. Includes both water bath and pressured canning of tomatoes.
October 8, 10 to 11 A.M. and 6 to 7 P.M.
October 12, 10 to 11 A.M. and 7 to 8 P.M.
- **All About Apples:** Online class on home food preservation of apples. Includes information canning applesauce and apple pie filling, freezing and drying apples.
October 22, 10 to 11 A.M. and 6 to 7 P.M.
October 28, 10 to 11 A.M. and 7 to 8 P.M.

Each session is **60 minutes** in length and available at **no cost**. Learn more at <https://ti-nyurl.com/y2m5nngl>.

New Pioneer Coop

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

Tuesday, Oct. 20, 6:30 to 7:30 P.M.

Low Waste Living. Online event. Join the Hiawatha Public Library and New Pi's Board of Directors Vice President, Kelli Kennon-Lane as she explains what low waste living is, why it's important for us globally, nationally, and locally, and how to implement low waste living with some practical examples and tips. Kelli will go over how COVID is impacting low waste efforts and what to do instead, how to change your consumption habits and which products/services support low waste living (including many from the Co-op!).

Registration is requested but not required. We'll use the registration list to email handouts and follow up after the event. Details at <https://www.facebook.com/events/328369751577763>.

Trees Forever

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

Thursdays, Oct. 8 and Oct. 15, 6 to 8 P.M.

TreeKeepers. Go to Webinar. The Trees Forever *TreeKeepers* program is designed for people who want to become more knowledgeable about urban tree planting and care and who wish to become a stronger voice for trees in their neighborhoods and communities. Participants in *TreeKeepers* will take part in hands-on and classroom presentations led by experienced Trees Forever staff members and other invited tree experts. All training will incorporate opportunities for practicing skills learned.

After completion of the *TreeKeepers* program, participants will be equipped with the knowledge of how to maintain our urban trees and plant trees for future generations. Trained *TreeKeepers* volunteers will be additional “eyes and ears” for trees in their neighborhoods and can share their knowledge with neighbors and key influencers. Each class will also have a volunteer service component. Help the trees in your community thrive by becoming a Trees Forever *TreeKeeper*! Cost: \$15. Register at <http://www.treesforever.org/treekeepers>.

Additional Resources/Event Opportunities

Bur Oak Land Trust

www.buroaklandtrust.org/events/

Iowa State Extension

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

Johnson County-ISU Extension

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

Project GREEN

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

Seed Savers

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



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:

Johnson County Extension Service
Attn: Master Gardener Newsletter
3109 Old Highway 218 S.
Iowa City, IA 52246

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Send email to: bielicke@iastate.edu