February 2016

MG Steering Committee Meeting
Wednesday, February 10, 7:00 pm; Johnson County Extension Office. There is no Steering Committee meeting in December. All are invited to attend!

Thymes Deadline
Thymes information should be sent to Jan Denehy at janice-denehy@uiowa.edu Please send news, volunteer opportunities, stories, pictures, etc., for the March issue by Monday, February 22.

Save the Date: MG Winter Potluck
The MG Potluck will be held Sunday, March 13 at the fairgrounds (Bad weather backup date April 10th). More information will appear in the February Thymes.

Need More Pictures! If you have pictures of Master Gardeners participating in MG projects or an event MGS helped with, send your digital pictures to carolyn-murphy@uiowa.edu, and she will compile a slide show to run during the social time. We all want to see what everyone has been busy doing.

Food Security Webinars and Mini Grants
Iowa State University has made available a series of 3 food insecurity-themed webinars. Master Gardeners and Patrons of local Food Banks may find this great information helpful. The topics include Hunger in Iowa, Working with Food Banks, and Best Practices for Food Safety. If you are in the Johnson County area and are interested in viewing these webinars please contact Shannon Bielicke at the Johnson County Extension Office by phone 319-337-2145 or email bielicke@iastate.edu. In order to keep track of who is viewing them we ask that you contact Shannon and then you will be provided with links to the webinars to watch at your convenience.

In association with the Webinars there are Master Gardener Food Security mini grants available. This is very exciting because it enables Master Gardeners in Iowa to engage in projects which increase the availability of healthy foods to families with low-income!

A reminder of an important detail of the program – in order to be eligible for the funds you need to have at least one active Master Gardener participate in the food insecurity-themed webinars which will be available in January and February 2016.

The Johnson County Master Gardeners Steering Committee has started to organize a committee to review the grant application and explore options of applying. If you are a Master Gardener interested in being a part of that committee please, contact Lavon Yeggy at 319-330-0952 or lavon47@Lcom.net. More Information about this program is available at: www.extension.iastate.edu/article/new-initiative-aims-increase-produce-iowa-food-banks

Save the Date: 33rd Annual Prairie Preview
Thursday evening, March 10 at The Celebration Farm’s Double Round Barn. Connie Mutel will present “A Sugar Creek Chronicle: Writing Climate Change.”

Linn County Winter Gardening Fair
Saturday, March 5th, Coe College, Cedar Rapids www.extension.iastate.edu/linn/news/winter-gardening-fair-2015
Iowa City Homebuilders Show – Butterflies

Lucy Hershberger, Forever Green Nursery, is sponsoring butterflies at the Iowa City Homebuilders Show, February 13 and 14th at the Coralville Marriott Hotel & Conference Center. We, the JCMG, are teaming up with her to help with the butterflies and sharing a table with information about butterfly gardens and native Iowa butterflies. This is an excellent way for Johnson County Master Gardeners to be visible in the community and to promote the Butterfly House at the Johnson County Fair. Over 4,000 people attended the homebuilders show last year. Over 800 people visited the butterfly exhibit and stopped by the Master Gardener table to ask questions and pick up information. Thanks to those that have volunteered to help with this event this year. We almost have enough MG signed up, however, if you interested in helping, let me know. Carolyn Murphy, carolyn-murphy@uiowa.edu.

Project Green 2016 Winter Garden Forums

Presented by Project GREEN and the Iowa City Public Library. Programs are in Meeting Room A at the library, 2–4 p.m., free to all, refreshments and door prizes!

Sunday, February 14, 2016

Jonathan Poulton will discuss his love affair with daylilies. A University of Iowa professor emeritus, Jonathan has developed a collection of registered daylilies and created several thousand seedlings by hybridization since 2006. He will explore the origins of modern daylilies from Hemerocallis species native to Asia, and describe hybridizers’ efforts to create the “holy grail” of daylilies—a true blue cultivar.

Sunday, March 13, 2016

David Cavagnaro will present “Where Our Food Comes From,” an around- the-world-in-eighty-minutes look at the origins of our major food crops. A decade of international travel as a scientific field worker, educational tourism leader, and photography instructor expanded his knowledge of natural history and his opportunities to photograph his environment. He has published five books, and his work has appeared in nature calendars and magazines, including Audubon, National Wildlife, Natural History, Ranger Rick, and Life.

Articles needed for the Thymes Newsletter

I would like to encourage MGs to submit short feature articles (300-500 words) of interest for the newsletter. These articles can be seasonal, something of special interest to you or a topic of interest to MGs. You might want to write an article related to a MG project you worked on or a topic you would like to learn more about. If possible, include a photo or two (jpg with at least 100 dpi) related to your article.

The newsletter is published 10 times a year (there are no issues in January and August) and is distributed via email or USPS for those who prefer a hard copy. Each issue is about 7-8 pages in length and includes a variety of regular features such as announcements of upcoming MG events and meetings, special events of interest to MGs, a monthly birthday list, and a list of committee members and volunteer opportunities.

If you are interested, please let me know. If you have an idea for an article or need help in putting an article together, contact me and we can discuss the topic and format. You will receive MG core volunteer hours for your work on the Thymes. Deadlines are listed in the Thymes.

I look forward to hearing from you and working with you on the Thymes in the New Year.

Jan Denehy, Thymes Editor, janice-denehy@uiowa.edu

Planning for spring planting starts now!

When the blustery cold stings your eyes and your breath seems to freeze in mid-air, if you’re like most Iowa gardeners you seek comfort leaving through seed catalogues and gardening magazines as refuge. The pages are filled with bright, cheery photos and ideas to help us plan beyond the cold winter. It’s never too early to start planning for your 2016 garden.

Iowa’s summer dry season can influence what and where we plant. The last two years have provided ample spring rains, but dry conditions in late summer and fall months can be hard on plants. Drought-tolerant, native plants are key to gardening success.

Arid soil often will have a high pH and low organic matter. In urban environments and highly-traveled city streets, often soil has a high influx of salt and sand. Although a natural reaction might be to add compost or fertilizer, overdoing either one can lead to uneven growth or even root decay. Instead, mulch is a better approach that will help conserve moisture and suppress weeds.

Choosing the right plants is also important. Suggestions for drought resistant plants can be found in numerous magazines and Chuck Porto and Laura Peters’ book, “Best Garden Plants for Iowa.”

Drought-tolerant plants to try:

Agastache – Agastache. Also known as giant hyssop. These herbaceous perennial plants are in the Lamiaceae family. They are also known as Hummingbird Mint, and are essential to a pollinator-friendly garden. Deer and rabbit resistant.

![Agastache](Image 1)

Barberry


Cleome – *Cleomaceae*. This attractive annual flower re-seeds prolifically and returns year after year. The plant blooms all summer and may last until frost occurs. Once established, they are drought tolerant and hold up well during summer’s scorching heat.

Yellow Columbine – *Aquilegia chrysantha*. It’s one of the most widely adapted of all columbines, a vigorous grower. Deer resistant, attracts hummingbirds.


Russian Sage – *Perovskia*. It’s tall, airy, spike-like clusters create a lavender-blue color. Pruning is necessary to keep its unruly growth in check. Deer resistant.

Indian Paintbrush – *Castilleja*. Commonly known as prairie fire offers annual and perennial herbaceous plants in the broomrape / Orobanchaceae family. Its flowers are edible.

Thyme – *Thymus*. Prefers full sun and good drainage. Does well along borders or beside paving stones. Plants are bee magnets.
**Help Wanted: Looking forward to spring!**

North Dodge Hy-Vee is interested in hiring several people knowledgeable in horticulture for their garden center. These are seasonal positions from mid-April to mid-July. The job includes plant care, answering customer questions, and running a cash register. If you have questions, contact MG Barb Schintler (351-1574). To apply contact Clay at North Dodge Hy-Vee (354-9223). ISU Extension does not endorse any business. This job opportunity is listed because it might be of interest to Master Gardeners.

**Outdoor Classroom at Home Ties**

When I learned through my church that "Home Ties" childcare center, which cares for the children of parents who are in temporary or transitional housing, needed help with their outdoor classroom garden, I immediately volunteered. I was already helping at the Shelter House garden and have personal links with this community. In addition, I was a Child Development Associate for three years and love working with preschoolers - on a part-time basis!

The Home Ties garden started several years ago with a design from Backyard Abundance and various community sponsors, including New Pioneer Co-op "Soil Mates" program and the Mennonite Church, which provides the site next to the childcare center which is in their church. In addition to an "outdoor play space," the garden was providing fresh produce for the childcare center and a chance for preschoolers to learn about gardening. It was being tended by staff members, with spring and fall cleanup help from Regina Middle School students.

http://www.backyardabundance.org/Services/Portfolio/ProjectDetails/tabid/146/albumid/36/userid/1/Home-Ties-Playspace.aspx

I met with Jan Koch, the Director and Head Teacher Amanda Nelson, and agreed to help tend the gardens, with the understanding that I would also provide educational enrichment to the program. This included garden-related story times, helping the children plant butterfly milkweed from the fair, and demonstrating where Brussels Sprouts come from a stalk from my home garden. We painted with corncobs, and I told them an original story about "The Lonely Pumpkin" that I found in their pumpkin patch after the fall cleanup. And of course, I was available to answer the staff's gardening questions.

Now that winter is here, we are considering educational themes for this year's crops - a native American Three Sisters garden? a pizza garden? a butterfly garden? A sensory garden?

I am very glad to have completed here in Iowa the MG internship that I began in NJ many years ago. As much as I have enjoyed this, sometimes I found it overwhelming to try to accomplish in just 2 hours a week. I hope more Master Gardeners will become part of the team!

Mary Lou Mayfield, Johnson County MG class of 2014 Cell Phone: 908-581-3428

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**February Birthdays**

- 4 Karen Wilke
- 7 Rosemary Tiwari
- 11 Laura Hahn
- 13 Carolyn Murphy
- 16 Jeff Smith
- 20 Jonni Ellsworth
- 20 Nicole Pearson
- 24 Kathy Brown
- 25 Judy Schweitzer
- 28 Jan Denehy
A listing of programs offered by organizations in our area that may be of interest to MGs.

February 2016

Backyard Abundance
http://backyardabundance.org/

Rediscovering the Spark Within
Prairiewoods
2/5/2016 3:30 PM - 9:00 PM

Edible Classroom Visioning
Robert A. Lee Community Recreation Center
2/6/2016 10:00 AM - 11:30 AM

Green Drinks
Share Wine Lounge & Small Plate Bistro
2/11/2016 5:30 PM - 7:30 PM

Daylilies
Iowa City Public Library
2/14/2016 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Blue Zones
www.bluezones.com
https://iowa.bluezonesproject.com/activities

Bur Oak Land Trust
(formerly Johnson County Heritage)
http://www.buroaklandtrust.org

Prairie Preview XXXIII
The Celebration Farm
3/10/2016 6:30 PM – 9:00 PM

Coralville Lake
www.mvr.usace.army.mil/Missions/Recreation/CoralvilletLake/NaturalResourceManagement/VolunteerEvents.aspx

Eastern Iowa Bird Watchers/IC Birds
http://icbirds.org/newsletter.html

Bald Eagle Watch and Expo
North Central Jr. High School
2/6/2016 10 AM - 3 PM

Freeze Fest
Terry Trueblood Recreation Area Lodge
2/20/2016 1 PM - 3 PM

Wednesday Morning Bird Walk
Kent Park CED
3/2/2016 8 AM

ECO Iowa City
www.icgov.org/?id=2256

Iowa State Extension
www.extension.iastate.edu/calendar/

Iowa Water
www.facebook.com/iowa.city.stormwater.volunteers?sk=wall

Johnson County Conservation
www.johnson-county.com/conservation

Johnson County-ISU Extension
www.extension.iastate.edu/johnson/

Linn County-ISU Extension
www.extension.iastate.edu/calendar/ShowList.asp?County=Linn&CountsScope

New Pioneer Coop
http://www.newpi.coop/new-pi-classes-and-community/

Project Green
www.projectgreen.org/

Seed Savers
www.seed savers.org/Education/

Trees Forever
www.treesforever.org/Events

100 Grannies
http://100grannies.org
http://100grannies.org/calendar/next-meeting/

Oaknoll-MG Volunteer Matching Program
MG volunteers are matched with Oaknoll residents to assist with planting and maintaining their small garden spaces at Oaknoll. Please contact Marilou Gay at 466-3047 or rmlgay@aol.com or Vicki Siefers 331-1798 or vsiefers@mchsi.com if you have any questions or would like to volunteer.

Solon School Gardens
Solon School Gardens can use your help! We are in need of MG's that would like to work on this Core project on their own time schedule. Work in these gardens is primarily pruning, weeding and moving plants. There are periodic group work events. Please contact Tracy Hufford at 624-3342 or tracehuff@aol.com
**Speakers Bureau**
Master Gardeners, are you interested in earning hours being a speaker? If so, please contact Sharon Jeter, or leave your name, number, and topics of interest and Sharon will contact you.

Also, if you give presentations for the Speakers Bureau please contact Sharon to inform her of your work. She records the information for her annual report. Contact Jackie Wellborn, 512-8382, jackiewe@mchsi.com

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**Johnson County Fair / 4-H Buckets of Flowers, Scarecrow:** Marilou Gay, 466-3047, rmlgay@aol.com
Lavon Yeggy, 330-0952, lavon47@Lcom.net

**Mark Twain People's Garden (Non-core):** Julie Hegmann, 337-3607, Julie@hegmann.net

**Oaknoll Garden Project (Non-core):** Marilou Gay, 466-3047, rmlgay@aol.com

**Plum Grove:** Betty Kelly, 351-4903, blkiowa@gmail.com; Joanne Leach, 351-4722, jleach@jlgardens.net; Lavon Yeggy, 330-0952, lavon47@Lcom.net; Carolyn Murphy, 541-7079, candmmurphy@aol.com

**Raptor Center Gardens:** Alice Linhart, 621-8073, mkeandalice@southslope.net; Karole Fuller, 338-3561, jnkfuller@live.com

**Speakers Bureau:** Jackie Wellborn, 512-8382, jackiewe@mchsi.com

**Social Events:** Steering Committee, Lavon Yeggy, 337-6327, lavon47@Lcom.net. Recruiting a new leader for 2016. Please contact Shannon Bielicke if interested. (bielicke@iastate.edu)

**Solon High School:** Tracy Hufford, 624-3342, TraceHuff@aol.com

**Steering Committee Chair:** Lavon Yeggy, 330-0952; lavon47@Lcom.net, Sharon Jeter, 631-2148, sharonjeter@gmail.com; Barb Krug, 431-5865; kbjfarm@yahoo.com

**Thymes:** Jan Denehy, 338-7493, janice-denehy@uiowa.edu

**Treasurer:** Loren Leach, 351-4722, lleach@jlgardens.net

**Volunteer Hours/Secretary:** Shannon Bielicke, 337-2145, bielicke@iastate.edu

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**Atended Displays:** Sharon Rude 319-331-3042, sbrude@q.com

**Butterfly House at Fairgrounds**
Carolyn Murphy 541-7079; carolyn-murphy@uiowa.edu, Barb Krug, 431-5865; kbjfarm@yahoo.com; Mike Murphy, 351-6345

**Coralville Historical School House:** Cindy Parsons, 400-7179; cparsons@icialaw.com

**Ecumenical Towers:** Jane Zukin, 339-9127; Janezukin@aol.com

**Demo Garden:** Sherlyn Flesher, 541-4277; khyber71@aol.com; Jon or Kristel Saxton, (515) 460-2415, kristel.saxton@gmail.com

**Downtown City Gardens (Non-core)**
Linda Schreiber, 319-936-8600, lnschreiber@gmail.com

**Fair Grounds Beautification:**
**Rain Garden:** Lavon Yeggy, 330-0952, lavon47@Lcom.net, Mardi Rasmussen, 624-4090, martharasmsussen@yahoo.com

**Fair Grounds Flower Beds:** Jan Dinnel, 338-2434, jdinel@aol.com; Barb Krug, 857-4569, kbjfarm@yahoo.com

**Firefighters' Memorial:** Barb Schintler, 651-5174, barbjschintler@hotmail.com

**Fundraising/Flea Market:** Barb Krug, 431-5865, kbjfarm@yahoo.com

**Hortline:** Esther Retish, 351-5011, eterish@mchsi.com; Lynn Todd, 354-8563, linctodd53@hotmail.com Recruiting help with leadership for 2016. Please contact Shannon Bielicke if interested. (bielicke@iastate.edu)

**Hospice Garden at Willow Creek Park:** Melanie Haupert, 351-1149, melaniehaupert@gmail.com

**Intern Class/Training:** Nicole Pearson, (507) 251-0902, nicole-pearson@uiowa.edu

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