

Germinator



Vol. 31, No. 3 Editors: Julie Stark/Kathy Hughes

April 2021

LINN COUNTY MASTER GARDENER EVENTS

Steering Committee Meeting*

ZOOM Meeting
April 6 • 6:30 pm

Executive Committee Meeting*

ZOOM Meeting
April 19 • 3:00 pm

Extension Council Meeting*

ZOOM Meeting
April 12 • 5:00 pm

Lowe Park Greenhouse Work Sessions

4500 N. 10th St., Marion
Tuesdays & Thursdays • 8:00-11:00 am

Monthly Virtual LCMG Social Hour

Zoom—Link Page 6
April 12 • 6:30-7:30 pm

* Meetings held via Zoom—Contact the Linn County Extension Office for link (319-377-9839)

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Germinator Deadline



All Linn County Master Gardeners are welcome to submit news, volunteer opportunities, stories, pictures, gardening book reviews, etc. for the April Germinator issue by April 21, 2021.

Please send to: Julie Stark (crgardengal@gmail.com) or Kathy Hughes (hughesydoozey@yahoo.com)

Charlene Woeste Plant Sale Goes to In-Person!

Co-chairs: Karen Woeste and Phil Pfister

Great news! The plant sale will be held as an in-person event this year, on Saturday, 8 May, 2021, at the American Legion Post 298, 625 31st Street, Marion, IA. We are very pleased to be able to hold the sale at the American Legion Hall again this year. Our first concern about holding the sale was if we would have enough volunteers with the tasks leading up to the sale, and the day of the sale. The results of the MG survey sent out in February were very positive. With that concern behind us, we have met at the Legion to discuss having some of the sale in the building, and some outside, payment, traffic and parking, etc., all the while considering social distancing, Iowa State, CDC and county health requirements. We want to ensure the sale complies with all the guidelines, and keeps the public and Master Gardeners safe.

We have lots of opportunities to volunteer to help dig, prep, price and care for plants in advance of the sale, the morning of, before and during the sale. If you haven't responded to the survey, please contact either Karen Woeste, hab319kiowa@gmail.com, or Phil Pfister, ppfister47@gmail.com.

We can also use donations from the Master Gardener gardens. If you have plants to donate, please let us know. The more plants and variety, the better the sale.

The plant sale is one of the major fundraising events for the Linn County Master Gardeners, so its success helps all the programs.



2019 Photo: Start of sale



2019 Photo: Sale in full swing



2019 Photo: Sale winding down



2019 Photo: Almost all plants sold out

Meet Your Current Steering Committee

By Linda Hofmeister, Chair

This is the fourth article highlighting members of the Steering Committee and features Randy Dusil and Tracy Hansen. I hope you are enjoying "meeting" the members!

Randy Dusil

Randy is married to Teresa, also a Master Gardener, and has two adult sons and one grandson.

He is a lifelong resident of the Cedar Rapids area graduating from Prairie, Kirkwood and ISU.

He is enjoying retirement following a 36-year career as a Project Manager in the construction industry.

His favorite type of garden activity includes vegetable gardening which he has practiced for many years. He has also planted trees, shrubs and other ornamentals over a 20-some year project developing their one-acre lot. Recently, he has assisted Teresa with flowers and other annuals. He believes it gives a firm sense of satisfaction to plant seeds or transplants and watch them thrive and mature.

His favorite season is spring as we eagerly emerge from winter and are able to spruce things up and take on the growing season.

Randy joined the Master Gardener program with the class of 2015. It was originally Teresa's idea to join and he soon decided that it was something they could embark on together as well as presenting the opportunity for an ongoing learning environment with a volunteer component.

Activities that he has been involved with include: Lowe Park greenhouse and Demo gardens, Plant Sale, Hortline, Winter Garden Fair, Garden Walk (including hosting their garden in 2019), and Steering Committee currently acting as Secretary.

This year will end his 2nd Term on the Steering Committee. Randy feels that this level of service was a great way to understand the organization and programming better as well as get to know the membership.

Tracy Hansen

Tracy was born and raised in Cedar Rapids, Ia. Her professional career and that of her husband took them to the Quad Cities for 15 years, Dothan, AL for 13 years and Springfield, IL for 10 years. They moved back to CR in January of 2017. Tracy was in the brokerage / financial industry for 35 years.

She has a stepson, daughter-in-law and two adult grandchildren. Both grandchildren are getting married this year, well educated, and have started careers. Tracy and her husband also have two bowsers and have, throughout their marriage, had 5 dogs that were all "save a pets". They were all like that box of chocolate where you never know what you're going to get.

Her first love of gardening was in the Quad Cities where she became a master gardener. Besides her full-time job, she began designing and planting perennial flower gardens for others. She continued that "side job"



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when they moved to AL. Her business was called EverBloom. Tracy considers her Alabama gardening a unique experience with plants and soil. It was great to see new plants, see how, or if, they were comparable to the Midwest plants and what made them work. Besides being able to garden 9 months of the year, she also loved other outside garden projects. She made cement birdbaths, cement candle holders for outside and cement wall hangings, real leaf mobiles, herb bath salts and herb dipping oils from the plants she grew.

Tracy became a master gardener again in CR in 2017. She has since been involved in Garden Walk, Lowe Park, WMT Garden Show, Winter Garden Fair, Plant Sales, training selection and the Steering Committee.

Tracy states that the Steering Committee gives you a voice for new ideas, gives a full view of projects and opportunities and makes you feel a part of the organization not just a spoke in the wheel.

Her favorite plant is one that blooms – she doesn't care when, just that it comes to life. She believes that a garden should be all about discovery - what works where, adding bulbs and vines to change the scape, and seeing what works well within a personal design. Everyone varies on design but Tracy's design is a bit formal - organized, with informality. Tracy shares that Covid may have changed our organization and how we plan our future but one thing it hasn't taken away is our ability to PLAY outside.

Low Park Children's Garden

By Brenda Garbe

There is an adventure waiting for children as they find many unique and interesting plants when they come to visit the Children's Garden at Lowe Park.

Below the white picket fence, children will find plants they can smell, touch and see that will bring sensory experiences. Snapdragons, several types of scented geraniums, white turtlehead, sensitive plant, oxalis, chives, basil, and pineapple sage are planted here. Children are encouraged to use their senses to explore this part of the garden. Near is a bird bath surrounded by coneflowers where birds stop for a drink. In the center of the garden is the Kiddie Korral (photo right) enclosed by Indian corn, sunflowers and climbing purple hyacinth bean. Inside, children will find log chairs and a small log table for imaginary play. Just outside are two benches flanked by dianthus where moms, dads, grandparents and/or friends are able to relax but are able to keep an eye on what is happening inside the Kiddie Korral.



Also near this area is a kaleidoscope which is positioned over a beautiful ornamental container filled with a variety of flowering plants. Other plants in this garden are groups of elephant ears, colorful cannas, strawberries, and salvia. Trellis plants like black eyed Susan vine and flame vine are also found. Other interesting groupings of plants are gomphrena, primrose, and miniature hollyhocks. The garden is laid out, so children can easily walk through the garden, enabling them to get up close and personal with the plants.

"Gardener at a Glance" - Featuring Donna Suchy

By Beverly Whitmore

April showers bring May flowers!! Where did this little saying come from? It likely originated in United Kingdom or Ireland, where the month of April tends to be especially rainy because of the position of the jet stream. The cooler climate in these areas also tend to push back the appearance of many flower species to late April and early May. The warmer temperatures and sunny days are certainly a blessing to gardeners including new Master Gardener Donna Suchy.

Donna grew up on a family farm that they still own in Tama County near Belle Plaine. They had a large family and always had a huge kitchen garden as well as orchards, grapes, berries, flowers and lots of animals. There was always plenty to keep them busy.

Following her mom's footsteps, Donna has a large family of 5 girls and 4 spouses, 4 grandchildren and 4 grand dogs that live on the west and east coasts. She is definitely missing spending time with them during this pandemic. Her husband is an artist and photographer, so they travel frequently picking up culture and materials worldwide... that is, when it's safe!



When I asked Donna, what is her favorite flower, tree, shrub or vegetable...her reply was "Wow, this is hard so I will share a few and you can choose." Our family tree is the oak that is strong but bends and it has always been a favorite, but Jean Wilson introduced her to the service berry and she does love the Korean maple which is like a Japanese maple but tolerate of our cold winter temperatures. She also loves peonies because they remind her of Iowa farms, especially the old-fashioned fern peony. Donna also finds the lilac bush amazing!

Donna loves fall with its fall harvests and amazing displays of vegetables, flowers and colors! It is always a time to celebrate the amount of work that was done in the garden and on the farm. It is never long enough but getting everything ready to rest for the New Year seems so full of hope for her.

I asked Donna what prompted her to apply to the Master Gardener Program...she responded with she wanted to spend time with fellow gardeners and also follow in the steps of her sister, Bonnie Wetzel, who is from Cedar Falls, who has been a Master Gardener for a long time and also their mom who loved botany and all growing things. She said her mom was organic before it was popular and taught them so much when they were young including Latin names for many trees and plants. From the MG Program, Donna said she has learned how little she actually knew but how lucky she is to now have friends to learn from.

Donna is an engineer and a patent attorney at Collins Aerospace working with aerospace and space program teams to develop the transportation systems of the future. It allows her to learn from the top scientists and engineers in the world. Innovation is a passion of hers that started when she studied physics at Iowa many years ago at the University of Iowa

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with Dr. Savage and Dr. Van Allen.

Donna has volunteered at Lowe Greenhouse where she loves working and propagating new plants. Phil, Brenda and Linda have been generous in sharing their knowledge with her. She is excited to see the plants she helped propagate and make it to the plant sale in the spring.

Welcome Donna!

"Sprout & Share" Project

By Bev Whitmore

A new project for 2021 called "Sprout & Share", a collaboration between 4-H and Linn County Master Gardeners, was a huge success!

Thirty-six children ranging from kindergarten to 5th grade were registered to purchase a kit for \$5. The kits included everything you would need to plant two varieties of tomatoes...a Better Boy Tomato and Opalka Tomato. The kits also contained little

envelopes with tomato seeds, planting cups, potting soil, coffee filter, ruler, popsicle sticks to use for labeling, written instruction, and log to record germination, watering and growth. Additionally enclosed was a magnetic card with the Hort-line phone number in case they had questions or wished to share their success with the project. A video created by Phil Pfister and Sylvia Street was also available to view showing planting instructions.

The goal of this project is to teach children how to grow tomatoes by planting seeds and to "share" tomatoes with those in need of food. A special thanks to 4-H Coordinator, J.D. Otterbein, and Master Gardeners Phil Pfister, Doug Smith, Brenda Garbe, and Sylvia Street for their time, thoughts, suggestions and help in making this project come together!!



"Sprout & Share" kits being assembled (left to right): Doug Smith, Brenda Garbe, J.D. Otterbein (4-H Coordinator) and Bev Whitmore.

April Zoom Social Hour Scheduled!

The next Zoom Linn County Master Gardener Social Hour will be April 12, 2021 from 6:30-7:30 with Host, Becki Lynch

Zoom Link: <https://iastate.zoom.us/j/98001564938?pwd=Zlk2cU96UmFWNzhSVEdzWjR6MksrQT09>

Or, go to <https://iastate.zoom.us/join> and enter meeting ID: 980 0156 4938 and password: 145339

2021 WMT IHeart Outdoor Living Show

By: Sue Usher and Barbara Wing

The IHeart Outdoor Living Show was held Saturday and Sunday, March 6 and 7. This is the second year that it was held in the space of the former Younkers Building at Lindale Mall. We were given a generous space in a prime location. The seminar area is located right next to our space.

This was the first in-person event that the MGs have had since the beginning of the Covid shutdown. We made some adjustments as we planned for this. Three tables were set out in front and one table was set behind those. All the tablecloths had plastic on top of them so they could be sanitized frequently.

Each of the three front tables had a beautiful display of potted plants that helped to initiate many conversations. The only other things in the front tables were the sheets that list the publications available through Iowa State Extension and our magnet with the hotline number. Master Gardeners wore masks and stayed behind the tables to help promote adequate distancing.



Handouts were spread out on the back table. This was different from previous years when visitors were encouraged to look through the handouts. This year MGs would pull the handouts and hand them to visitors as they expressed interest. The handouts available were chosen as we thought they might be relevant with recovering from the derecho.

Eighteen Master Gardeners volunteered during the two days. Volunteers answered lots of questions and listened to many stories about the effects of and recovering from the derecho. Information about trees and shrubs was a main topic. How to deal with new sunny areas was another popular topic. We received many good comments and responses about our willingness to share our knowledge and expertise.

Presentations were made by Heather Robertson, Deb Walser and Phil Pfister. Saturday's presentations Heather, "Get out and Garden" (16), Deb, "Trees for Bees and other Pollinators" (11), and Phil, "Earth Friendly Lawn Care" (6). Sunday Deb (7) and Phil (7) repeated their presentations. Total attendance was 47.



Show attendance was about 1300 this year. People were ready to get out. Everyone wore masks and seemed willing to observe distancing.

This event gives Master Gardeners and Iowa State Extension the opportunity to reach another demographic of people to become more aware of what we do and how to access our services.

The Lowe Park Greenhouse

By Phil Pfister

The Lowe Park Greenhouse is really filling up with many blooming plants, succulents, hanging baskets and now annual flowers and vegetables. We are ramping up for the plant sale, demo gardens and donation gardens. We have had a steady group of volunteers at the Tuesday and Thursday morning work sessions, and daily, watering and tending to the growing activity.

If you would like to volunteer, come to the greenhouse on Tuesday and Thursday mornings between 8:00 and 11:00. Before too long, we will also add some evening workshops. If you would like to volunteer, but would rather work alone, we can schedule times during the day or evening. Masks are required per Extension guidelines.



Master Gardeners, Linda Hayward and Brenda Garbe tend to the greenhouse's growing activity.



In addition to the plants we are starting, the plugs for the City of Marion will be arriving the week of 29 March. We will need to pot them up as soon as we can. Planting and growing the plugs is a variation on what we do, so it provides another opportunity to work, learn, and enjoy the greenhouse experience.

I hope many of you can take advantage of this volunteer opportunity. It's a great experience.

Watch Nationally Recognized Speakers-Free!

By Linda Hinzman

Need education hours? Want to hear nationally recognized speakers for FREE? Check this opportunity out. I have spent each morning the week of March 22-26 watching wonderful presentations from my recliner! You can too!

Ohio State University sponsored these speakers and their presentations were recorded and available to you. Go to the website (left; in yellow) and check them out. The screen shot I took only includes the presentations through 3/24, but by the time this appears in the Germinator, all the presentations should be available.



OSU's website also includes presentations they have sponsored since 2012, so if these topics don't interest you, there may be something in the archives for you.

LCMG Steering Committee Meeting—March 2, 2021

The meeting was called to order via ZOOM at 6:30 pm and roll called.

Present: Dyan Anderson, Rose Blank, Lynne Brokaw, Diane Brooks, Randy Dusil, Tracy Hansen, Cathy Holub, Linda Hofmeister, Cindy Lehman, Barb Neal, Jennifer Reed, Deb Walser and Bev Whitmore; **Absent:** Gina Milroy (excused); **Also Attending:** Michelle Sillman.

Minutes from the February 2, 2021 meeting were distributed previously and approved.

Monthly Business

The financial report through 2/28/2021 was distributed and discussed. More detail for expenses would serve as better understanding going forward.

The Sprout and Share program registration is open from March 1–10. It was clarified that the program is open to non-4H youth as well.

A living memorial for Judy Stevens is being pursued at Lowe Park.

The IHeart Media Outdoor Living Show is set for this coming weekend, March 6-7, with sufficient volunteer representation.

The MG Virtual Meet-up is set for Monday, March 8; Karla McGrail, host.

The Intern Training will now be facilitated by the ISU Extension State Office including application review and interviewing. Discussion was held regarding how to increase local applications to expand diversity throughout age, gender, cultural, etc. Some entities to reach out to were suggested such as Kirkwood Horticultural Program, McAuley Center, Mathew 25 (Rose) and CR Schools. Offering a scholarship was mentioned as a possibility. Jennifer, Cathy and Michelle will meet to plan further.

Share A Row and tactics to increase program participation by both volunteers (member and non-member) and food banks was discussed. A marketing push to get the word out to the community will be developed to reach a broader audience. It is envisioned that a flyer or card with easy initial steps to participate would be widely distributed directing those interested to the Extension website for more detail.

Deb updated progress of ongoing Indian Creek Nature Center talks. These have been well received with approximately 100 participants on recent Saturdays and some are being recorded for future use and posting.

Next Steering Committee Mtg: Tuesday April 6 at 6:30 pm Via ZOOM

Next Executive Committee Mtg: Monday March 22 at 3:00 pm Via ZOOM

Next Extension Council Mtg: March 8

Respectfully Submitted, Randy Dusil

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Extension and Outreach

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