

Germinator



Vol. 32, No. 12 Editors: Julie Stark/Kathy Hughes

December 2021

LINN COUNTY MASTER GARDENER EVENTS

Executive Committee Meeting

Linn County Extension Office
December 13 • 3:00 pm

Extension Council Meeting

Linn County Extension Office
December 6 • 5:00 pm

Work Session

Low Park Greenhouse
December 18 • 9:00-11:00 am

2022 WGF Previews

Linn County Extension Office
December 11 • 10:00 am– 5:00 pm
Topics and Speakers are inside this Germinator issue

Deadline for Reporting Volunteer/Education Hours

December 31

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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 January Germinator issue by December 21, 2021.

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

Coordinator Message



Master Gardener Training: I'm happy to report that I've finished my MG Training and passed the test! It was a tough test and I'm glad that it's behind me now. I thoroughly enjoyed all of the content and learned so much. For the most part, all of our other trainees have finished, although we did have a couple of them have to drop out of the program due to health issues. Hopefully they'll be able to rejoin the program next year.

Library Talks: We had another great slate of Library Talks in November at the Ladd Library in Cedar Rapids. Thanks to everyone who did those talks and for Deb Walser and Wil Carew who coordinated all of those. We'll be heading out to the smaller community libraries this winter so we'll be getting you information on that as it becomes available.

Indian Creek Nature Center Classes: We were asked by ICNC to teach some classes out there and it's a great opportunity to teach at another location and to reach a different audience. We'll have classes in January, March, April and May. Many of the classes are "hands-on" projects so they'll be a lot of fun. We've scheduled our January and March classes and we'll be coming up with some classes for April and May. I'll let you know when the classes are in case you're interested in taking any of them. Also, if you're interested in teaching a class please let me know!

Winter Gardening Fair: Plans for the WGF continue and we'll be offering previews for everyone to come to in December and January. In December we'll be doing previews on Saturday, December 11th. Previews are a great way to see the presentations and get continuing education hours. More details on those will be coming. I'll also let everyone know when the WGF volunteer shifts are in late December.

Monarch Research Station: In November we had a great initial meeting about helping with some of the gardens out there. We've helped with their gardens in the past but it's been awhile so it's exciting to be working out there again. I'll let you all know when our next planning meeting will be if you're interested in joining the effort.

Budgets: It's that "fun" time of year when we have to do budget work. I'll be letting everyone know how the project budgets came out sometime in January. Our MG budget has to be approved by the Linn County Extension Council.

Reminder—Enter Volunteer/Educational Hours!

Time is ticking for those of you who need to enter your hours into the VRS System. If you have questions on how to login or have problems entering hours, please contact the Extension Office and they will direct you for assistance.



Please try to get these in as soon as possible, without waiting until December 31st.

2022 WGF Previews

Need some educational hours to fulfill your 2021 MG requirement before the end of December? Or, just want to be entertained and learn a thing or two? Below is a list of 2022 Winter Gardening Fair Previews scheduled at the Linn County Extension Office Conference Room.

Please note: Previews originally scheduled for December 5th have been cancelled and will be rescheduled at a later date.

December 11

10:00 Rain Gardens (Karla McGrail, LCMG): Learn the basics about designing, constructing and planting this landscaping feature that can capture rainwater runoff on your property and do your part to help improve water quality downstream.

11:00 Understanding Weeds! (Karla McGrail, LCMG): There are so many weeds out there! Here is a chance to learn about a bunch of our common weedy plants, including how to identify and control them, but learn other interesting information that might help you understand how they have become unwanted invaders in your landscape.

12:00 Heavenly Hydrangea (Wil Carew, LCMG): Hydrangeas bloom in a variety of colors including white, blue, pink, green and red too. Join Wil as he discusses the how-tos of planting and pruning. He also shares varieties which are his personal 'celestial' favorites and are locally available.

1:00 Ring My Bells for Coral Bells! (Wil Carew, LCMG): If you thought coral bells were just green plants with tiny pink flowers that your grandmother grew, think again. This class will cover what they are, where and how to plant, and the rainbow of colors available.

2:00 Mulch This Covers It (Phil Pfister, LCMG): The benefits of mulching are many. Join Phil in this discussion of the choices we have for mulches, and which material works best in each application. This presentation will cover the use of mulch in landscaping, flower and vegetable gardens.

3:00 Earth-Friendly Lawn Care (Phil Pfister, LCMG): You CAN have a great-looking, neighbor-pleasing lawn and still be earth-friendly. Join Phil as he explores the various techniques used to maintain a safe and healthy lawn, including organic options and the responsible use of chemicals.

4:00 Moving On Out! Gear up for Bringing Plants Outdoors! (Carol Elloitt, LCMG): It's (almost) Spring. Plants have been inside since before the last freeze. Like all of us, they are itching to get back outside in the sun. Let's get ready together. Come learn how to wake them up for a jump start.

Finish the Gardening Story

Here's a chance for all Master Gardeners to let your imaginative juices flow! Finish the story below and email it to Kathy Hughes (hughesydoozey@yahoo.com). We will publish your creativity in future Germinator Issues!

One bright sunny November afternoon, I was walking in the woods when suddenly I saw something strange in the path ahead. There were millions of tiny footprints coming out of the bushes. I had some free time before my Master Gardener event would begin so I decided to follow the footprints...

Thank You—Thank You—Thank You!

By Beula Dvorak

It was a beautiful Saturday morning when Pat Kadlec, David and Angel Burns, Robin Clark-Bridges, Dave Mahlke, Vicki Keegan, Tiffany Miller, Sandy Rosenberger, Julia Flaherty and Reece, and Beula Dvorak gathered at the Department of Corrections Gardens to clean off and prepare them for spring planting. 2021 was a challenging year for them as COVID conditions still existed, staff changes occurred and maternity leave was taken. In the midst of all this, the gardens got neglected. So we cleaned the beds from weeds and dead plants, added peat, perlite and 2 loads of compost to prepare them for spring 2022 planting; and all was completed within 2 hours! Angel Burns and Pat Kadlec also volunteered to become a part of this garden team! Above you will see a shot of the work group and below pictures of the gardens before/after our work session. THANK YOU to each of you who helped with this project. We look forward to the new growing season and a productive year 2022



Marion Community Garden Greenhouse/Storage Building

By Phil Pfister

This project is now complete for this fall. The final actions involved anchoring the greenhouse to the base, and the base to the ground. We also added rain gutters, but will wait until spring to set up the rain barrels. The greenhouse doesn't have electricity, so no good way to heat it. However, this fall, Peg Heald, lead volunteer for the Marion Community Gardens, successfully grew lettuce in containers in the greenhouse, and produced enough to donate it to the Marion Food Pantry.

Many thanks to Randy Dusil for all his help brainstorming, problem solving and constructing this project. We have had many favorable comments about the building, and I look forward to watching all the ways it will be used.



Hoop House at Lowe Park

By Phil Pfister

We have started rebuilding the hoop house at Lowe Park. The original hoop house collapsed into itself during the derecho. It was surprising to me that the wind blew the hoop into itself, instead of blowing away, and what was more surprising was that the 12 bolts (six on each side) sheared off at the anchor ground posts. In thinking about what we took apart after the derecho, it looks like the plastic covering kept everything from blowing away. Very interesting.

We started construction of the hoop house on Wednesday, November 10 and were joined by the Linn Mar Venture Academy students (photo right). It was a cold and windy day, but the students stayed with the project, until we ran out of time and they had to return to school. When they did need to warm up, they worked in the greenhouse deadheading plants. Our accomplishments that day included driving in new anchor posts, installing the ledger boards and hooping the cattle panels. They were a big help and fun to work with.



Our next event took place on Tuesday, November 16. The plan was to install the door frames, the plastic cover and start working on closing the ends. We were using vinyl trim board to follow the hoop and fasten the plastic to. Unfortunately, one of the boards had a defect, and broke pretty much at the halfway point, so that put an end to that day's work. We have identified another source for the vinyl trim board and will pick up replacement materials the week of November 29. Hopefully we will be able to close up the structure by the end of that week and have it ready for use in the early spring.



If anyone is interested in extending the growing season by growing in a hoop house, please let us know.

Many thanks to the Linn Mar Venture Academy students (photo right), their teacher, Lisa Skilang; Master Gardeners, Vicky Keegan, Randy Dusil, Larry Edwards, Sandy Fiegan, Pat Kadlec, Mary Mikkola, Linda Miller, Mark Goodsmith and Doug Smith for assisting with this project.



Low Park Greenhouse Happenings

By Brenda Garbe

After the Lowe Park Greenhouse roof was repaired and cleaning/sanitation happened, the growing crews were able to start receiving plants in late October. The Master Gardener Family has responded with a wealth of "Mother Plant" donations to propagate and divide for the May Plant Sale. We have many geraniums, begonias, succulents, and coleus plus miscellaneous too numerous to list. Our estimate is that we have about 25% more than the last couple of years. This can give us a good start for the February Winter Garden Fair and the May Plant Sale.

The first stage is to clean, trim and re-pot any mother plants that have overgrown during the summer. Stems that are too leggy and woody are not good candidates for taking cuttings; they need trimming to promote new growth, so we can take cuttings in a few weeks. Some plants are nice and lush and can have cuttings taken immediately; succulents are typically slow growers no matter their condition, so always take a bit more time.

There are different methods of propagation that we utilize, primarily root dividing, stem cuttings, leaf cuttings, and layering. Seed propagation will come later in the season, typically after January 1 (more on that at a later date). We utilize "The American Horticultural Society Plant Propagation" book by Alan Toogood, as one of our reference guides for the recommended methodology of different plants. Sometimes we'll experiment with a couple of propagation methods on the same plant to see which have better results for our environment.



Photos (left to right): Ilona Hadley, Master Gardener trainee; Julie Quebe, Master Gardener and Julia Flaherty, AmeriCorp.

We transplant multiple cuttings into 3" or 4" pots, sometimes three to a pot. Then they get watered from the bottom for half-an-hour before moving to a warming mat. They will reside there for a week or two, at a temperature of typically 70-80 degrees to promote faster rooting.

Our watering crew is vital to make sure the transplants, seedlings and mother plants are kept watered in a consistent manner. Especially vulnerable are seedlings and the 3" and 4" pots sitting on the heat mats. When we get warmer outside temperatures, the greenhouse can really heat up and dry out the plants. By having the plants checked and watered on designated days, eventually twice a day, we have good success. As plants mature, we'll apply liquid fertilizer to boost blooming right before the Plant Sale.

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It takes many hours and hands to get all the annual flowers and vegetables ready for the Plant Sale, Demonstration Gardens and Community Outreach Gardens. The Winter Garden Sale is a smaller sale effort, we have a tiny footprint to sell from and focus is just on indoor houseplants and herbs. But it is a glimpse of what people can expect at the May Plant Sale.

Anyone and every level of experience is welcome to come learn and practice with us. Workdays are Tuesday and Thursday 8-11 AM. We train on everything from watering to propagation. Some jobs like watering are done primarily on your own schedule, otherwise we work as a small group.

Some evening and Saturday opportunities are being offered this growing season (evenings 6:00-8:00 pm and Saturdays 9:00-11:00 am. No reservation necessary, no tools necessary, we furnish everything.

Tuesday November 30: 6-8 PM

Saturday December 18: 9-11 AM

Thursday January 6: 6-8 PM

Saturday January 22: 9-11 AM

Tuesday February 1: 6-8 PM

Winter Garden Fair is February 19

Saturday February 26: 9-11 AM

Thursday March 3: 6-8 PM

Saturday March 19: 9-11 AM

Tuesday April 5: 6-8 PM

Saturday April 23: 9-11 AM

Plant Sale is May 7

If you have any questions, contact me (Bbgarbe@hotmail.com/319-361-8517). Hope to see you soon.

Needs for 2022 Community Outreach Gardens

By Beula Dvorak

We know the past couple growing seasons have been challenging for some of our community garden partners, but 2022 is a new growing season. To keep this growing project alive and well, we need some additional project participants. So far, for the upcoming year we need:

- 4-6 MGs to create the Lowe Park Donation Garden Growing Team
- Additional Co-Leads for Catherine McAuley Gardens, Olivet Mission Gardens, Horizons Gardens, Hiawatha School Gardens, more to be determined. These people work with the garden folks to determine what kinds of support/education is needed & wanted.
- MGs willing to provide educational sessions with "Kids in the Garden" at Olivet and other sites that might be arranged.
- MGs willing to assist with adult educational sessions developed for any of our community garden sites.
- MGs willing to assist with harvesting produce and transporting produce to HACAP or other food pantries.

More details will develop as further planning for the new season continues. If you are interested in any of these kinds of opportunities, please contact Beula Dvorak at bdvorak4@aol.com, 319-895-8206 or text 319-540-1247 and I will be back in touch with you.

Linn County Master Gardener Joint Steering Committee and Project Chairs Meeting November 9, 2021 – 6:00 PM

The meeting was called to order and roll called.

Present: Dyan Anderson, Rose Blank, Randy Dusil, Tracy Hansen, Cathy Holub, Linda Hofmeister, Barb Neal, Jennifer Reed and Bev Whitmore.

Absent: Cindy Lehman (excused) and Deb Walsler (excused). **Project Representation:** Phil Pfister, Brenda Garbe, Doug Smith, Paula Wilson, Pat Beaty, Beula Dvorak, Linda Hinzman and Karla McGrail. **Projects Not Represented:** Celebration Event, Expert Education Committee, Family Caregivers (excused), Farmers Markets (new), Germinator (excused), Marion Seed Library, School Gardens 101 (excused), Speakers Bureau/Library Talks (excused), and WMT Outdoor Living Show. **Also Attending:** Sandy Rosenberger (Coordinator).

The September 1, 2021 meeting minutes were distributed with information packets.

General Business

Jennifer presented the results of the vote on nominating slate for new officers as follows:

- * Dyan Anderson as Vice-Chair: effective 4/1/22-6/30/23
- * Rose Blank as Secretary: effective 1/1/22-6/30/23
- * Tracy Hansen as MG at-large less than 5 years: effective 1/1/22-6/30/23
- * Mike Martin as MG at-large 5+ years: effective 1/1/22-6/30/24

Sandy discussed the Revised Procedure Guide which was approved through electronic polling. Revisions include: Revised organization and committee structure, change to fiscal year in lieu of calendar year; Scholarships and Stipends to be approved by Executive Committee in lieu of separate committee, shortening the awards list to major awards and moving others to a recognition category.

Community Outreach Gardens update: Beula reported on COG which was initiated in 2013 with the pilot garden at Catherine McAuley Center. A list of active gardens was provided and reviewed including lead, partner coordinator and crop yields where available. Several of the non-profits have their own food pantry or consume produce within, otherwise, most is donated to HACAP. The focus of the project is on consultation, education and support with collaboration as opposed to full MG operation. Future desires include focusing on food insecurity, 2 leads per garden, increase youth involvement and initiate application process for new gardens.

Hortline update: Paula and Doug provided a report and update on the Hortline. Paula sends out an invitation for lead and scribe volunteers on a google form during the 2nd week of the month, returns draft results with vacancies and distributes final form during 3rd week of the month. The distribution list for invitations is 37 of which roughly half are active regulars. It was suggested to send to all MG's to enhance participation. There is generally a need for more leads and procedures for training was reviewed. There is a checklist for scribe training and a 2019 MG Hortline Manual provides guidance for volunteers. Research sources include ISU as preferred source, ISU publications, ISU Horticulture and Home Pest News, ISU Plant and Diagnostics ID, and others. A log sheet is used for all inquiries to assure completed responses and is also used to compile useful categorized data.

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Budget proposals for FY 2023 are due November 19. Information packets distributed include guidelines, request form and recent historical budget trends.

Sandy challenged everyone to be forward thinking and innovative in their projects to align with the Extension's Strategic Initiatives for Food Insecurity and Mental Health/Well Being. Bev then led the group in a brainstorming exercise. Pairs of two were given a random existing project and challenged to write down thoughts, ideas and suggestions for innovation and improvement. A brief discussion followed, and Bev collected the work for future consideration.

Marketing and promotion of MG programs will be given greater emphasis going forward.

A discussion was held about the private group Facebook page Linn County Master Gardeners. A presence on Instagram is being considered as well.

Mike briefed the group on the programing, goals, and facilities at the Monarch Research Station. Greater partnering and collaboration with Master Gardeners is welcomed.

Barb made motion seconded by Jennifer to adjourn the meeting at 8:10.

Next Joint Meeting of Steering Committee/Project Chairs: January 11, 2022 at 6:30 pm

Next Executive Committee Meeting: December 13 at 3:00 pm

Respectfully Submitted, Randy Dusil

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Extension and Outreach

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