

# Germinator

Vol. 30, No. 12 Editors: Julie Stark/Kathy Hughes

December 2020

## LINN COUNTY MASTER GARDENER EVENTS

### ***Steering Committee Meeting\****

Extension Office  
December 1 • 6:30 pm

### ***Extension Council Meeting\****

Extension Office  
December 14 • 5:00 pm

### ***Executive Committee Meeting\****

Extension Office  
December 21 • 3:00 pm

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

## Coordinator Comments

*By: Jean Wilson*



This will be my last column for the *Germinator* and I have mixed feelings about it. I've enjoyed working with you all and helping you in your mission to meet with the public to share your knowledge. I was excited to take on the challenge of getting our records organized, getting our policies and procedures in place, and to get the program ready to face the challenges in the future.

I'll confess, it was quite a mess because we've had so many coordinators over the years, all with different levels of training and organization. I'm pleased to say all

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the files are in order now, I've reached out to MGs who have fallen off our radar, and I've gotten our records up-to-date with who is active and who isn't. I also have the internal files organized now, so if we want to find information about past events, hopefully we can find it. That should make it easier for those who come after me to come up to speed quickly.

I'll be sorry to quit working with you all, but I'm also excited about retirement and the new opportunities it offers. We'll be moving to Tiffin in early December and I'll have a whole new yard to contemplate this winter, for planting in the spring. My sister lives in Iowa City, so I'll be able to visit her much more easily. And of course I'm still writing books and hope to publish a multi-book science fiction series next year. I have several more mysteries that I want to publish, and I'm always working on a new one. And who knows – maybe I'll come back to volunteer on a few of your projects. I'm still a MG, so that's always a possibility.

I'll be working until the end of December, either in the office or at home. This year I will NOT be hounding you to turn in your hours, because none are required of you this year (but turn them in anyway, okay?) I'll be working with Janice in the office to hand off details about what's coming up, so I think you'll have a smooth transition once someone is hired. So that's it for now – I'll see you next year when I'm a civilian!

## **Marion Community Gardens**

*By Phil Pfister*

End of the year for the gardens. They are cleaned up and ready for spring. The Marion Parks Department poured cement for walkways around the handicap accessible beds. We installed two Veg Trugs that are handicap accessible, funded through the 2020 Growing Together Iowa mini-grant.

Thanks to Master Gardener Larry Edwards and Marion Community Garden lead gardener, Peg Heald, for helping position and fill the beds with compost. Special thanks to Peg Heald for her dedication to the garden. Peg is the driving force behind the success of the Marion Community Garden.



*The foreground shows the Veg Trugs funded by the 2020 Growing Together Iowa mini-grant. Beyond are some of the other beds, cleaned up and ready for next spring.*



*Marion Community Garden volunteer, Peg Heald by the sign she made to help inform the public on produce being harvested from the garden for donation to the Marion Food Pantry.*

# LCMG Mourn the Loss of Two Dedicated Members

by Beth Roof with input from Deb Walser

Wava Schmidt, Lifetime Master Gardener passed away on August 25. Wava and husband, Jerry, were members of the class of 1995. As a gardening team they were both active in a variety of LCMG projects. Wava, a retired teacher, was a natural with *From the Ground* and as *WGF* presenter. Her frequent speaking topics were herbs and perennial gardens. She also served on the Steering Committee. Wava's cheery disposition welcomed all with an interest in gardening regardless of their level of expertise. The Schmidts hosted a summer garden walk and membership picnic at their rural Lisbon farm. Early proponents of the prairie landscapes, they converted a portion of farmland to prairie. A variety of perennial beds from old-fashion peonies to modern designs complimented a large pond complete with a dock and pond house. Wava's participation with MG's decreased following Jerry's death in 2014 although her love for gardening remained. We remember Wava's significant involvement in the Master Gardener Program for over 20 years.



Judy Stevens, Lifetime Master Gardener passed away on November 16. Judy was a member of the class of 2001 and received the Master Gardener of the Year Award in 2016. Judy had volunteered over 2000 hours including *Project Independence*, *Hortline*, *KCRG*, and Steering Committee. She was best known for her commitment to *Speaker's Bureau* through *Library Talks*, the *Lawn and Garden Show*, *WGF* and private club presentations. Anxious to speak to any size group on a variety of gardening and environmental topics with in-depth knowledge and fervor. One of her favorite topics was vegetable gardening in containers. With an abundance of deer and shade, Judy planted containers of vegetables (many underplanted with herbs) on her deck; the only sunny spot! She teasingly said she liked to start plantings in little pots, transplanting them to larger ones gave her a feeling of success! Judy was passionate about recycling and minimizing waste. Gardening and Living Green was a frequent topic. Her presentation interest also included garden folklore and biblical garden references. It's been said that "nobody can do a program like Judy." We've lost a great educator in Judy.



# Low Park Charlene Woeste Plant Sale Perennial Nursery

*By Phil Pfister*

The August 10<sup>th</sup> derecho pretty much did a job on the fences we had around the plant sale perennial nursery to keep the deer and rabbits out. But, on Saturday, 31 October 2020, major progress was made rebuilding everything. The fence work coincided with the project to add compost to the demo gardens, but that was per plan. Some of the participants helped on both projects.

Unfortunately, I didn't copy down the names of the 16 volunteers who helped that morning, but we thank each and everyone. A smaller team continued work on the nursery fence the next day, and a some subsequent days, and now the fence is complete and, hopefully, deer and rabbit proof.

Thanks to all who helped make this happen.



*Doug Smith, Julie Quebe, Larry Edwards, Sandy Fiegan and Brenda Garbe tightening and attaching the rabbit fence.*



*The fence is finished around the large perennial nursery.*



*Beula Dvorak and Karla McGrail unloading compost for the raised beds in the perennial nursery.*

## Low Park Demonstration Gardens

*By Brenda Garbe*

The Demonstration Gardens are in slumber mode for the winter. On October 31<sup>st</sup> we had a nice showing to help us haul and apply compost to the gardens and raised beds. In about an hour and a half we spread 5 ½ loads of compost, perfect slow release fertilizer to leach in during the winter months. Thank you to all the folks who turned out to lend a hand. We couldn't have done it without you all.

We have an opening for someone to adopt the Splash Garden at the Demo Gardens. It's a small garden right off the parking lot, the first thing you see when you come up the west sidewalk, so it needs to sparkle. Designing, planning, planting, and maintaining the garden during the seasons are requirements. We need someone who would like to show their creative side and join the Demo Garden team. It's a great way to volunteer, work safely from a distance on your own schedule and yet be a part of a great group of gardeners. Come join us.

We've started work in the Green House to propagate plants and soon will be planning our seed orders for 2021. Many of these plants go into the May Plant Sale the remainder to Demo Gardens and Community Outreach Gardens across the city. If you feel comfortable working in-mask, in small groups, we have openings for folks that want to assist in plant work. We welcome your personal experience and desire to learn. Join us on Tuesday or Thursday mornings 8-11.

Contact me with any questions.



*Doug Smith*



*Laurie Azeltine*



*Mark Goodsmith and Sandy Fiegen*



# Low Park Greenhouse – Back to Growing!

By Phil Pfister

We are pleased to report, the greenhouse is back together and ready for another growing season. Thanks to the Marion Parks Department, the roof is on and sealed. Thanks to the Master Gardener volunteers, the greenhouse, benches, bins, shelving, equipment, pots and peripheral equipment is cleaned, sterilized and either put away or ready to use. Starting the week of 16 November 2020, we are “back in business” and taking mother/stock plant donations. If you have plants to donate or have us overwinter for cuttings, contact Brenda Garbe ([bbgarbe@hotmail.com](mailto:bbgarbe@hotmail.com)). Please be sure that the plants you bring are bug free. Controlling insects in the greenhouse is one of the most difficult challenges we face.



*Marion Parks employees cutting greenhouse panels to fit the vent and roof.*



*The greenhouse is back in business with a large group of mother/stock plant donations ready to be overwintered.*

Our thanks to Nora Becken, Jenniffer Dickens, Randy Dusil, Larry Edwards, Sandy Fiegen, Sue Fletcher, Brenda Garbe, Linda Hayward, Donna McCabe, Mary Mikkola, Sue Murphy, Julie Quebe, Donna Suchy, and Lyn Tormey for helping get the greenhouse back in working order. There are a few small things that still need to be done, but nothing that is impeding us from getting started growing again.



*Marion Parks employees installing roof panels. The ladder is used for support as it would stress the panels to step directly on them.*



*Marion Parks employees moving the top of the Doris McElmeel pergola that came down in the derecho. The pergola will be rebuilt in the spring.*

We always welcome more volunteers who are interested in being involved with the activities at the greenhouse. We do require face covering, and are practicing social distancing, and we now have restroom facilities (a Port-O-Jonny). We have work sessions most Tuesday and Thursday morning

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starting around 8:00. If you are interested in volunteering, contact Brenda Garbe ([bbgarbe@hotmail.com](mailto:bbgarbe@hotmail.com)), or Phil Pfister ([ppfister47@gmail.com](mailto:ppfister47@gmail.com)).

The derecho was devastating, for sure, but the impact to the greenhouse could have been worst if it happened when we were growing for the plant sale, demo gardens, donations to community gardens and pantries. There is another bright side; the original roof had reached its 10-year warranty for light transitivity. It was still a good roof, but starting to yellow some. The new roof, which arrived ahead of expectations, comes with a 15-year warranty. While we would never want to see anything like this again, we can be thankful that we did come out ahead in this instance.

## **2021 Steering Committee**

*By Linda Hofmeister*

As we begin to prepare for the new 2021 calendar year, it is time for the annual changes of membership of the Steering Committee. As we transition, many thanks are extended to Bev Whitmore for her commendable leadership as Chair in 2020. As a refresher, the various duties of the Steering Committee include:

- Evaluate community needs and interests of potential MG clients in Linn County and help the Coordinator determine how to meet those needs
- Ensure the purposes of ISU Extension and Outreach, and the MG program, are being met
- Provide guidance to the Coordinator and support in management of the program
- Work with the Coordinator to set policy for MGs
- Provide general program oversight and approve program priorities
- Review quarterly and annual project budget requests to make sure they are sufficient to meet the goals of the projects
- Consider volunteer questions and concerns if necessary
- Guide and support project chairs/teams in maximizing achievement of the goals of their projects

Please join me in welcoming the 2021 Steering Committee members:

- Linda Hofmeister – Chair
- Jennifer Reed – Vice Chair
- Dyan Anderson – New Member
- Rose Blank
- Lynne Brokaw
- Diane Brooks
- Randy Dusil
- Tracy Hansen
- Cathy Holub – New Member
- Cindy Lehman
- Gina Milroy – New Member
- Barb Neal
- Deb Walser
- Bev Whitmore

## Meet this Year's Master Gardener Interns

**Carolyn Wilson:** I went through the program training in Wisconsin in high school but didn't do much with it then. Now after years of home gardening and trying to encourage gardening in any way I can, I'm really looking forward to being a part of the master gardening community! I'm really interested in helping in any of the gardens, the garden walk, planting for pollinators, and the seed library.

**Sylvia Street:** I am eagerly anticipating my opportunity to volunteer as a Linn County Master Gardener. I value lifelong learning and it will be rewarding to "pay it forward". My grandmother cultivated my "green thumb" genes when I was a little girl helping her with her farm garden and houseplants, specifically African violets. After moving to Iowa three years ago I decided to share a hobby with my husband. Raised beds, composting, vegetables and herbs, pollinator shrubs and flowers have kept us busy. Most recently we transformed a portion of our grass lawn by preparing and seeding a native prairie plot. As a retired educator and conference presenter, I look forward to sharing my love of nature with all ages.

**Diane King-Bergstrom:** I am enthused to continue learning and applying the knowledge I gained from Iowa Master Gardeners. I have a passion for teaching youth and working with fellow Linn County residents in facilitating programs in our community. I am interested in School Gardens, Pollinators, Community Gardens and so much more. I am looking for the best plants to put around my Pickleball court, something thorny for the competition side; feel free to advise.

**Becky Wheeler:** I have been gardening for over 40 years, love to get into the soil and grow beautiful vegetables and flowers. This Master Gardener program is icing on the cake!

**Sarah Vieth:** I have always loved flowers, gardening and the outdoors. I enjoyed learning more about these subjects and picked up valuable information on native plants, trees and shrubs and landscaping, as well what other resources are available to help answer questions or provide more information. I look forward to learning more as I volunteer and meet other Master Gardeners.

**Donna Suchy:** I enjoy gardening because it makes me happy to be part of something so beautiful. I enjoy seeing plants and creatures thrive. My plan is to use what I have learned to help plants and creatures grow together in harmony and not sweat the small stuff.

**Nora Becker:** I am very much a novice at gardening. I have enjoyed learning about botany, composting and landscape design. I plan to continue and look forward to "hands on" experience.

**Marilyn (Lyn) Tormey:** I thoroughly enjoy gardening and learning about Iowa native plants. Nature provided me with this soil and I will do the best I can to take care of it.

**Ann Ghoske:** I have worked in retail for forty years and retired two years ago. I thought this was a good way to give back and keep active.

**Kathy Bass:** I am semi-retired, and a snow bird but have always been a plant enthusiast. Being raised on a farm in Iowa, agriculture has been a major part of my life then and now. It was a easy transition for me to

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begin this journey with MG training in horticulture. With the completion of the MG training I am eager to continue to learn, volunteer and share these skills with our community.

**Shauna Burns:** I have been gardening since I can remember, but always on the farm during the summers at my grandparent's. After a 20 year break living the city life as a teen and young adult, I rediscovered my passion as a homeowner and as more free time became available to me. In addition to gardening, I enjoy cutting quilts, and dabbling in teas and tinctures as an herbal alchemist!

**Shara Hart:** I have had my own garden for five years; however, I come from a family of Master Gardeners and have been around gardening my whole life. I am so excited to take what I learned in these classes and bring them into my own garden, as well as, family discussions at home.

**Karie Kelty:** Recently my husband and I became empty nesters. I was encouraged by my daughter, Carly, who is a Polk County Master Gardener, to join the Master Gardener program. I enjoy working in my flower gardens and consider it therapeutic. Becoming a Master Gardener is a great way to continue educating myself while helping educate others and giving back to my community.

**Audree Larson:** The travel limits of the pandemic have increased my interest in learning how I can create continually evolving, year round points of interest in a sustainable manner in my own yard as well as others.

## Reporting 2020 Volunteer and Educational Hours—NOT Required

As a reminder, Linn County Master Gardeners DO NOT NEED to fulfill minimum volunteer or educational hour obligations for the 2020 calendar year due to COVID-19.

If you have been volunteering, however, it is appreciated if you could still enter your hours before the end of the year, so we can track it in our system.



## Linn County Master Gardener Steering Committee Meeting—November 4, 2020: 6:30 PM via ZOOM

The meeting was called to order and roll called.

**Present:** Rose Blank, Diane Brooks, Julie Clemens, Randy Dusil, Tracy Hansen, Linda Hofmeister, Cindy Lehman, Barb Neal, Jennifer Reed, Deb Walser, Bev Whitmore and Diane Wiesenfeld. **Absent:** Lynne Brokaw (excused) and Jan Knott (excused). **Also Attending:** Jean Wilson (MG Coordinator) and Barb Wing.

Minutes from the October 6, 2020 meeting were distributed previously and approved.

### **Discussion With Project Leaders:**

WMT Outdoor Living Show: Barb Wing presented discussion on the project which has been renamed as WMT iHeart Outdoor Living Show. This is a 2 day event held in early March at which the Master Gardeners provide community contact via a publication and information booth and 2-3 topic presentations. This year's event was held at Lindale Mall. Volunteer participation usually runs 25-30 members.

### **New Business:**

Membership changes for 2021 were distributed by polling prior to this meeting and approved. Current member, Jennifer Reed, will act as Vice Chair. New members filling vacancies will be Dyan Anderson, Gina Milroy and Cathy Holub all of which will be invited to and welcomed at the December Steering Committee Meeting.

Partnering with Indian Creek Nature Center has moved forward rapidly and 2 Master Gardener presentations have already been completed. The next talk will be Bees, Birds, Bats and Butterflies on November 10 via Zoom. To sign up for these talks and all ICNC events go to their website menu to find the calendar. A small fee may be required.

Over the last month project leads proposed their individual budget requests for Fiscal Year 2022 which was presented and discussed. If Winter Garden Fair can be once again offered in 2022 the budget should remain in balance.

### **Coordinator Report:**

Training has been completed and some individuals have already passed the final test. Many have already become involved in volunteering for various projects. A bio of each trainee is included in this *Germinator* issue to introduce new interns and the directory will be updated and distributed.

Possible partnership is being considered for the gardens at the Linn County Fairgrounds including design input from MG and maintenance by 4-H.

Volunteer involvement at MG events needs to be limited to members due to ISU requirements for insurance liability and periodic background checks. Jean will be checking regarding the involvement by MG family members support which occasionally happens.

Fulfillment of volunteer and education hours has been waived for 2020 due to the pandemic. However, for those with hours they should be entered on VRS as tracking is still important.

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Next Steering Committee Meeting: Wednesday December 1 at 6:30 pm  
Via ZOOM

At this time there will not be a December Executive Committee Meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Randy Dusil

## IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

### Extension and Outreach

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