

Germinator

Vol. 29, No. 11 Editors: Julie Stark/Lisa Slattery

November 2019

LINN COUNTY MASTER GARDENER EVENTS

Steering Committee Meeting

Extension Office
November 5 • 6:30 pm

Extension Council Meeting

Extension Office
November 11 • 5:00 pm

Executive Committee Meeting

Extension Office
November 18 • 3:00 pm

November Library Talks

6:30-7:30 pm
Ladd Library
3750 Williams Blvd. SW
November 6, 13 & 20

Winter Garden Fair Previews

Extension Office
November 12, 16, & 19
Refer to Full Schedule on Page 2-3

Fall Celebration

Lowe Park
November 4 • 6:00 pm

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.



Reminder: Feel free to “batch” your hours if you wish (i.e., enter all hours for the week into one day), to make entering hours easier.

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

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2020 Winter Garden Fair Previews

Calling all Linn County Master Gardeners and Interns - The 2020 Winter Garden Fair preview sessions have been scheduled. Join our own MGs as they share their knowledge and expertise on a vast array of subject matter. Come for one class or two, or plan on spending the whole day gaining valuable information you can use and share with our community. All sessions will be held in the large conference room at the Extension Office at 383 Collins Rd. NE. These hours can be used to complete your education hour requirement. NOTE: SCHEDULE IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE—WATCH YOUR EMAILS FOR ANY UPDATES!

Tuesday, November 12

- 5:00 - Phil Pfister - "Starting Seeds and Transplants"
- 6:00 - Phil Pfister - "Home Greenhouses"
- 7:00 - Wanda Lunn - "Plant a Colorful Spring Garden"
- 8:00 - Wanda Lunn - "Climbing Fences: Growing Clematis"

Saturday, November 16

- 10:00 - Chrissy Littler - "Cutting Gardens"
- 11:00 - Deb Walser - "Square Foot Gardening"
- 12:00 - Larry Dawson - "Ponds and Water Features"
- 1:00 - Rose Milden - "Houseplants"
- 2:00 - open
- 3:00 - open
- 4:00 - open

Tuesday, November 19

- 5:00 - Devon Dietz - "Iowa Butterflies and Their Food"
- 6:00 - Devon Dietz - "Backyard Wildlife Management"
- 7:00 - Wil Carew - "Creating Black Gold"
- 8:00 - Wil Carew - "Heavenly Hydrangeas"

Saturday, December 7

- 9:00 - Deb Walser - "Perennials for 2020"
- 10:00 - Judy Stevens - "Gardening Green"
- 11:00 - Judy Stevens - "Grandma's Vintage Garden"
- 12:00 - open
- 1:00 - open
- 2:00 - open
- 3:00 - open
- 4:00 - open

Tuesday, December 10

- 5:00 - Steve Bartlett - "Koi Ponds at Home"
- 6:00 - Jay McWherter - "Tropicals"
- 7:00 - Jay McWherter - "Hosta Companions"
- 8:00 - Lynne Brokaw - "Zen Gardens"

Saturday, December 14

- 9:00 - Karen Woeste - "Container Gardening"
- 10:00 - Mike Anderson - "What's Wrong with My Tree?"
- 11:00 - Karla McGrail - "Weed ID"
- 12:00 - Cindy Fagan - "Public Gardens of Iowa"
- 1:00 - Sandy Holterhouse - "Plant, Food and Nutrient Synergies"
- 2:00 - Diane Wiesenfeld - "Gentle Yoga for Gardeners"
- 3:00 - Diane Wiesenfeld - "Gardening for Good Health"
- 4:00 - open

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Thursday, December 19

- 5:00 - Linda Hinzman - "Prairie Gardening"
- 6:00 - Lisa Hinzman Howard - "Veggies 101"
- 7:00 - Lisa Hinzman Howard - "Cheap Tricks"
- 8:00 - Peggy Pearson - "Small Space Gardening"

Saturday, December 21

- 9:00 - Doug Smith - "Care and Maintenance of Garden Tools"
- 10:00 - Carol Elliott - "Garden Art and Accents"
- 11:00 - Larry Edwards - "Life and Times of a Japanese Beetle"
- 12:00 - Larry Edwards - "African Violets"
- 1:00 - Sam Krumholz and Deanna Thursby - "Gardening with Children"
- 2:00 - Judy Bemer - "A Taste of Herbs"
- 3:00 - Judy Bemer - "Butterflies and Herbs"
- 4:00 - open

We hope to see you all come out and support our presenters.

Your Downsizing Cast-Offs are Needed!

Are you downsizing and purging out dishes and glassware? If so, we can use it for next year's Winter Garden Fair hands-on class.

We need dishes (dinner, salad, dessert in china pottery or glass), vases large & small in glass and pottery, and glasses (any kind, any color). We would also love mismatched bowls, platters, teapots, cups and knick-knacks.

If you have something to donate, please bring your goodies to the Hort room. Anything we don't use will be donated to charity. So clean out and help out!

November Library Talks

Are you in need of some educational hours for 2019? If so, check out the list below for upcoming library talks! All talks are 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Ladd Library 3750 Williams Blvd SW

November 6: *Bulbs for Spring & Summer Garden Beauty* (Beula Dvorak): This is everything you wanted to know about growing bulbs in your garden. Which ones are perennials? Which ones have to be planted each spring and then dug up and stored? When do you plant bulbs? How do you plant them? Which are the best bulbs to grow here? How do you overwinter flower bulbs. All of these questions will be answered!

November 13: *Don't Pitch It!* (Chrissy Littler): Every year, you plop down a good chunk of change to spruce up those spring and summer flower beds with a variety of annuals. Did you know some of these can actually be successfully overwintered, saving you big \$\$\$? We'll talk through some common tender perennials that are grown as annuals and the tips/tricks to bringing them back to life in the New Year!

November 20: *Plan a Salsa Garden* (Deb Walser): What plants can we grow to make a salsa garden? Which tomatoes, which peppers and other garden grown produce goes into growing a salsa garden? We'll learn the tricks of when, where and how to plant a salsa garden and see plans that make it easy to grow.

Pollinator Project Members Attend Landowner's Forum

By Linda Hinzman

The annual Linn County Landowner's Forum was held September 29 at Clearwater Farm (location of the Monarch Research Station). Several members of the pollinator project attended and staffed a table disseminating pollinator information as well as answering general gardening questions from the attendees.

The purpose of the Forum is to encourage landowners to consider how they can help the monarch as well as other pollinators in a variety of ways, including prairie restoration on land that is not good for farming, planting pollinator plants in ditches, waterways, rain gardens, bioswales, etc.

The keynote speaker was Dr. Doug Tallamy, a professor in the Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware. Dr. Tallamy is one of the leading experts in the nation on insects, food webs, and the relationship between the two. His book, *Bringing Nature Home*, is recognized as one of the most important books of its kind. He was a featured speaker at the International Master Gardener Conference in June.

Plan now to attend the forum in October 2020.

A Successful Year for ISU “Growing Together” Mini Grant

By Beula Dvorak

The 2019 growing season was another phenomenal success for our ISU “Growing Together” Grant. With the \$2000 received we were able to purchase many needed items for our partner gardens including lots of peat and perlite as soil amendments, fencing and trellising, tomato cages, fertilizers or weed control products, and a wide variety of seeds and plants.

The partner gardens included in our grant project this year included..... Olivet Missions, Catherine McAuley Center, Wellington Neighborhood, Horizons, New Bo, Hiawatha School, Dept. of Corrections, Old MacDonalds Farm at Bever Park, Tanager Place, Prairiewoods, Marion Uptown, Lowe Park Donation Gardens, and Southeast Linn Community Center.

Eighteen Master Gardeners were involved in grant activities mentoring volunteer gardeners, providing educational sessions at the gardens, assisting with the planting, maintaining and harvesting at the gardens or donating produce from their personal gardens. THANK YOU to each and every one for your participation!



Southeast Linn Community Center.

A very special THANK YOU to our eleven community individuals who partnered with our CONNECT, GROW, SHARE A ROW component of this project. This number included 4 farmer gardeners and also Feed Iowa First who provided very large amounts of produce!

Together, a total of **OVER 21,000 lbs.** of fresh produce was harvested and donated for food insecure people in our community. That is a number to be proud of!

Whether or not we apply and receive the grant next year, the project will continue. **YOU** are invited to join the Community Outreach Gardens Project and get involved for next growing season. We will need additional Garden Leads and Mentors, so watch the *Germinator* for more information in months to come.



Wellington Neighborhood



Department of Corrections

Planting for Pollinators Project – Old McDonald's Farm

By Julie Clemens and Beula Dvorak

One of the projects the Planting for Pollinator team and the COG team have been advising on over the past few months is working with the Parks and Recreations staff on establishing additional pollinator areas at Bever Park, in the Old McDonald's Farm location.

On October 16th all the teams partnered in planting various perennial plants that were kindly donated by Becki Lynch from her own yard, (Thank You Becki)!

Different types of grasses, Fescue and Brome, were planted near the parking area on one of the sloped hills. A bit farther down next to the large oak trees various large, variegated Hosta's and Pachysandra ground cover were planted. Also planted next to the trees were Ferns, Hellebore, and Lungwort. Down in the duck pond upright and creeping Sedums, Cone Flowers, Pachysandra ground cover, Lungwort, grasses and many other types of plants were used.

The Parks and Recreation staff will be maintaining the areas that were planted although there may be additional advising as the area continues to develop.



2019 Swamp Fox

By Phil Pfister and Bev Whitmore

Seed Savers Presentation and the annual Apple, Pepper and Tomato Tasting was held on Saturday, September 28th at the Lowe Park Arts and Environment Center.

Seed Savers Presentation: 27 guests attended the Seed Savers presentation. Bev Whitmore brought in a bouquet of flowers that had set seed from her garden, so the guests could see which seeds were ready for saving and which needed more time to dry before collecting. Bev also brought in a Balloon Milkweed pod, which is round like a small balloon and has soft spines coming out of it...it had just cracked open earlier in the day, so the guests could get a first hand look at the small, dark colored seeds that were layered down the center with the pure, white silk protecting them. Bev also brought Mexican Sunflower, Coneflower, Blackeyed Susan, Cleomes, Four O'Clocks and Blackberry lily stems with seeds.

After a 20 minute presentation on saving and storing seeds, Master Gardeners, Sue Murphy and Pat Beaty, led the guests out to the display gardens and assisted with ID'ing the plants and collecting seed. Guests



were also welcome to simply take some seed packets that Bev had already prepared...in case it would have rained during the event.

...If you think in terms of a year, plant a seed; if in ten years plant trees; if in terms of 100 years, teach the people...Confucius

The Apple, Pepper and Tomato Tasting: The tasting started at 5:30, and was supposed to be over at 6:30, although we ran long, as people kept coming in and we still had samples to taste. In total, we counted 113 people, who sampled apples, peppers and tomatoes, and then voted on their favorites. Actually, not everyone votes as there are a lot of families and couples where only one or two members might vote, and some people don't try all the samples. For example, peppers have a smaller following than apples. What's always fun is watching the kids' sample everything. Sometimes more than once, and that's all good.

This year we had 16 varieties of apples, 12 varieties of peppers, and 20 varieties of tomatoes. The top three apples were Jonathan, Crimson Crush and Empire. The top three peppers were Colossal (sweet bell), Sweet Banana (sweet with mild heat), and Lady Bell (sweet bell). The top three tomatoes were Artemis (red cherry), Blondköpfchen (yellow cherry), and a tie between Juliet (saladettes) and Yellow Pear (pear). Final results are in

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the table below.

Our thanks to Allen’s Orchard for the apple donations, and to the Master Gardeners who donated apples, peppers and tomatoes. The mix of varieties make the samples very interesting, and a fun comparison of some of the fruits and vegetables that we can pick from.

Thanks also to Pat Beaty, Lois Buntz, Sandy Fiegen, Karla Goettel, Mary Mikkola, Sue Murphy, Juli Schoff, Polly Tsamis, and Joan West, for

Apple Tasting	
Varieties	Votes
Jonathan	12
Crimson Crisp	11
Empire	11
Fortune	10
Senshu	10
Snow Sweet	10
Cameo	8
Wealthy	8
Gala	6
Sweet Sixteen	6
Sweet Tango	6
Liberty	5
Red Delicious	4
Cortland	3
Laura Red	2
Mcintosh	2
Total votes cast	114

Pepper Tasting	
Varieties	Votes
Colossal (sweet)	9
Sweet Banana	9
Lady Bell Hyb (sweet)	8
Bell Boy	6
Cajun Belle (hot)	5
Goliath Jalapeno (hot)	3
Early Jalapeno (hot)	2
Poblano/Ancho (med hot)	2
Habanero (hot)	1
Hot Banana	1
Long Thin Cayenne (hot)	1
Spicy Lady	1
Total votes cast	48

Tomato Tasting	
Varieties	Votes
Artemis	14
Blondköpfhen	9
Juliet	7
Yellow Pear	7
Mountain Magic	6
Better Boy	5
Celebrity	5
Supersonic	5
Big Beef	4
San Marzano	4
Black Beauty	3
Blueberry	3
Black Vernissage	2
Golden Jubilee	2
Roma	2
Brandywine	1
Mountain Merit	1
Patio Hyb	1
Jetsetter	0
Super Beefsteak	0
Total votes cast	81

everything they did to prepare the samples and set the event up, keeping the samples stocked, and cleanup afterwards.



Things We Love—A Trip to the Vallarta Botanical Gardens

By Kathy Hughes and Julie Stark

On our February vacation to Peurto Vallarta, Mexico (as the snow was falling with temps in the single digits in Iowa!) a friend of ours and fellow LCMG, Kay Schultze, highly recommended a visit the Vallarta Botanical Gardens. Prior to our mid-week visit there, two things we learned from the "locals" (besides the beauty of the Gardens) were how great the restaurant was and how bad the "jejenes" (no-see-ums) were. Yikes – those no-see-ums LOVE us! We almost decided not to go because of them but we DID go (with bug spray in hand) and glad we did.

We took a cab from our resort to the downtown bus stop and got on the public transportation, El Tuito Bus. Nobody else gave the driver any money so neither did we. As we took our seats, a couple fellow American passengers tell us: "You were supposed to pay when you got on the bus and you better have the correct change or you'll get yelled at!!!!"

When we got off at the Gardens, we gave the driver what we hoped would cover our fare in pesos; it must have been sufficient as we weren't thrown off into the woods and killed by wild animals (and we weren't yelled at)!

After paying the Garden's nominal admission fee, we generously sprayed ourselves with the insect repellent (including our hair) and started our visit greeted with rows and rows of beautiful buganvillias (*Bouganvillea sp.*) (photo right). Further down the path, we encountered a huge gazebo outlined with hanging Burro's Tail (*Sedum morganianum*). This succulent, also called Donkey's Tail, is native to Southern Mexico and produces trailing stems up to 2 feet long (photos below).



We explored the Gardens on our own for a while and then ran into a tour guide who migrated from the United States ten years ago. His next scheduled tour wasn't for an hour but he graciously offered to take us on a private tour right then. What great luck! Founded in 2004 and made



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Continued from Page 9 public in 2005, the Vallarta Botanical Gardens is 64-acres of native forest and manicured garden grounds as well as a tropical river called Rio Horcones, which visitors could swim in (but we chose not to!).

Our guide introduced us to a couple of our many favorite species in the garden: Old Man Cactus (*Cephalocereus senilis*) and Philippine Jade Vine (*Strongylodon macrobotrys*).

Currently considered endangered, Old Man Cactus (*Cephalocereus senilis*) is native to Central Mexico and can grow to 40 feet, usually flowering at about 20 feet. Younger plants (photo right) are almost completely covered by white hairs while older cacti tend to have hair near the growing tips of the stems. Underneath those wisps of whitish hair are sharp spines. The Philippine Jade Vine (*Strongylodon macrobotrys*) is native to the tropical forests of the Philippines and is pollinated primarily by birds and bats. Hanging trusses of up to 3 meters long hold 75 or more claw shaped aquamarine colored flowers. The oblong fleshy seedpods contain up to 12 seeds (photo right).



The tour was truly interesting and fascinating. The volunteers as well as the groundskeepers love their jobs, evidenced by their wealth of knowledge and the beautiful well-manicured Gardens.

Lunch at the famous Hacienda del Oro Restaurant was wonderful and the scenery we had while dining was breathtaking. Included in our Garden admission fee was a complimentary passion fruit drink beautifully garnished with our new favorite Philippine Jade Vine flower (photo right)! We were seated in the balcony overlooking the garden's forest where we could watch staff feed watermelon and cantaloupe rinds to the brightly colored tropical birds.



After a quick stop at the gift shop we ended our journey, both tired (without one single bug bite!) and with still a 45 minute ride back to the city AND another stressful situation with when to pay and how much to pay for the bus ride!!! Well worth the trip!



Coordinator Comments

By: Jean Wilson



The growing season is starting to wind down and so are many of our activities.

We decided to cancel our Hands On event because we just didn't have enough attendees to merit having it.

The committee will meet to discuss how to proceed and what to do differently if we decide to have this again. There are a lot of different events happening at the same time, so maybe we just need to decide on a new strategy. It's all a learning experience!

Our MG program has been around for a long time and I'm sure a lot of things have been done in the past that we could all learn from. To aid us all in remembering things, Cindy Lehman has volunteered to be our historian. She and I will work out a format to gather information about what we've accomplished every year so we can share it with everyone—and keep track of it so we can look back on it at some point.

We've also wrapped up a successful year of training. We had 13 trainees go through the training, and I hope to see them all volunteering at events in the future. I tried to give them a sense of the volunteer opportunities that are available throughout the training and I also put together an "event schedule" so they have an idea of what happens when and when we need folks to help. Whenever you see a new face, make sure to welcome them into the MG world.

What's next? I hope to send out a survey to all MGs soon, asking you to evaluate the projects you've worked on. And I'd like to get some Tech Talks scheduled to help people get more comfortable with their gadgets. And let's not forget the gathering of hours – I need to track your hours and make sure everyone has their required amount in. Plus I have some goals I'd like to accomplish before the end of the year...

I guess there's always something to keep me busy!

October 1, 2019 – Steering Committee Minutes—DRAFT

The meeting was called to order and roll called.

Present: Diane Brooks, Kathy Carew, Randy Dusil, Linda Hofmeister, Cindy Lehman, Sam Krumbholz, Jackie MacLaren, Kay McWhinney, Deb Walser, Bev Whitmore, and Diane Wiesenfeld. **Absent:** Lynne Brokaw (excused), Julie Clemens (excused), and Jan Knott (excused). **Also Attending:** Jean Wilson

A revised format financial report generated from the actual extension office ledger was distributed and discussed.

Old Business:

Budget Reporting Process - The fiscal role of the Steering Committee is to focus on programming and to monitor effectiveness of finances to evaluate that they are adequately meeting the mission of individual projects. The actual approval of budgets and expenses are already made internally thru project leads, coordinator, budget committee, staff and extension. The group voted to approve the use of the reports, referenced above, attempting to combine income and expense onto one page and in addition continue to see transaction reports monthly. This avoids the extra effort of creating a separate spreadsheet and utilizes reports that already exist maintaining accuracy and consistency.

Third Quarter Project Reports – These were distributed electronically for review.

There are 7 MG candidates expressing interest in filling 4 vacancies on the Steering Committee opened via completed terms. These applications will be reviewed by the Executive Committee in this month with nominations brought to the November Steering Committee for approval. Newly elected members will then be invited to the December Steering Committee meeting for introduction.

New Business:

Discussion was held regarding how this committee could best monitor the structure of projects to maintain quality services in accordance with ISU Extension efforts. Continuing review of quarterly project reports as well as evaluating metrics and or feedback from participants were suggested. Also, inviting project chairs to Steering Committee meetings would be useful to determine and show a level of support from the group as needed.

Having a MG Historian was discussed to continue a lapse from previous records that exist. Two MG's have expressed interest in assisting in this effort.

Laptops and projectors have been purchased to satisfy an ongoing need for speaker engagements.

Budget requests for projects are due October 7th.

There are opportunities to partner with programs of the other Extension departments. Individual requests will be review separately for approval of volunteer hours pending potential policy changes that may arise from the ISU Extension.

January and February meetings will likely be held remotely via Zoom Conferencing due to weather and seasonal availability of some participants.

Next Steering Committee Meeting: Tuesday November 5, 2019, 6:30 PM-Small Conference Room

Next Executive Committee Meeting: Monday October 21, 2019, 3:00 pm-

Small Conference Room
Respectfully Submitted,
Randy Dusil

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

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