

Germinator



Vol. 32, No. 9 Editors: Julie Stark/Kathy Hughes

September 2021

LINN COUNTY MASTER GARDENER EVENTS

Joint Steering Committee and Project Chairs/Co-Chairs Meeting

Extension Office
September 1 • 6:00 pm

Executive Committee Meeting

Extension Office
September 20 • 3:00 pm

Extension Council Meeting

Extension Office
September 13 • 5:00 pm

Weed & Feed

Low Park
September 27 • 6:30-8:00 pm

September Library Talks

Hiawatha Public Library
150 W. Willman Street
Hiawatha, IA
Sept. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 • 6:30-7:30 pm
(List of talks are on page 7)

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Germinator Deadline

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

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

Coordinator Message:

If you look at most of our kitchen counters, they're probably full of tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, and more! I love all of the beautiful produce coming out of my garden but I don't enjoy the pressure of having to process it in a timely manner before it spoils. I would hate for any of it to go to waste after working so hard on my garden! I've told myself that this is the year I need to start canning some of my produce so wish me luck!



Extra Produce: If you're getting to the point where you just can't eat another tomato, don't forget that all of our local food pantries would love to get your surplus supply. If you go to our extension website at extension.iastate.edu/linn/Donate-Produce it will list all of the food pantries that you can donate to. An additional pantry that didn't make the list is The Freedom Foundation at 609 Center Pt. Rd. NE in Cedar Rapids. They are a non-profit that helps vets and their food pantry is open Mon-Sat.

Winter Gardening Fair: We're looking for someone to teach a Straw Bale Gardening class and also some folks to teach some hands on learning classes. Please contact Deb Walser at wadeborah@mchsi.com if you interested or know of someone who could teach one of those classes.

Fall Interns: Our total count of interns ended up being 40, although there are still a few people who haven't returned their paperwork. Regardless, we have a great class and there's an incredible amount of interest in gardening right now. We have all ages taking the class and our two biggest age groups are 30-39 and 60-69. We actually have 3 people in their twenties as well. The class is mostly women but we do have 8 men signed up. Of the 40 students, 35 will be regular MGs and 5 will be going for the Pro Hort certification. The Pro Hort folks usually take the class for their jobs and therefore don't have the volunteer and education requirements. We need mentors for the students so please let me know if you would like to help! It's not a huge time commitment but would involve just checking in to see how they're doing along the way.

AmeriCorps Position: I've been approved to hire an AmeriCorps member for a nine month term beginning in September. The position is 20 hours per week and the member will be helping with our events, at our Greenhouses, in our community gardens, and in the office on projects. If you know of anyone who might be interested please have them contact me at my information below. Minimum age is 20 and there's no maximum age!

Library Talks: There is a great line-up of Library Talks coming this fall and in September they will take place every Thursday night at 6:30pm at the Hiawatha Public Library. In October the talks will be at the Marion Library and Lowe Park and in November they will be at the Cedar Rapids Ladd Library location. This is an excellent opportunity for you to get your Education hours in. Reminder: you need 10 education hours per year.

My Contact Information: Please feel free to email me at sandyros@iastate.edu or call me at 377-9839 (ext. 316) for anything!

Beauties from the Lowe Park Demo Gardens

Photos By Jenniffer Dickens, Intern



Marion Farmer's Market

By Bev Whitmore

The Linn County Master Gardeners can routinely be found at the Saturday Farmer's Market at Taube Park in Marion. On this particular Saturday, Fran Potratz, Cindy Lehman and myself enjoyed the beautiful day while answering gardening questions and handing out free information (photo right).

Brochures are numerous and range from why tomato plants turn brown to growing a butterfly garden...and much more.

We would love to have some fellow Master Gardeners join us!



Would You Like to be on the 2022 Garden Walk Committee?

By Kim Becicka and Linda Hofmeister

We are seeking Leads for three of the following four sites for the July 16, 2022 Garden Walk. One of our goals for the Walk will be to have an educational focus for each of the gardens. Leads at a site are involved with working with the site contact and facility support/assistance in preparation for the Garden Walk event and supporting volunteers the day of the Garden Walk at the particular site. We have three sites that need a Lead or possibly co-leads !!!

- Etzel Sugar Grove Farm with Scott Koepke – Biodiversity and a 7-acre permaculture component
- Monarch Research Station with Mike Martin - Thriving Pollinator Habitat
- Lyn Tormey Home - Certified Monarch Waystation
- Sylvia Street Home – with Leads Bev Whitmore, Jan Knott and Sarah Neff - Home Garden with Repurposing evident throughout the gardens

We are planning a committee meeting in mid-September, so if you are interested in joining our committee and working on this exciting project, please contact one of the following:

Kim Becicka @ kim.becicka@gmail.com 319-310-5941

Linda Hofmeister @ LRHofmeister@att.net 319-533-4142

2021 ISU Horticulture Station Fruit & Vegetable Field Day

By Phil Pfister

The 2021 ISU Fruit and vegetable Field Day was held Thursday, 22 July at the Horticulture Research Station. The event was canceled in 2020, due to the Covid pandemic, so it was great that we could have the field day this year. There are a lot of interesting research projects taking place, and I'm sure we didn't cover everything, but following is a summary of the projects we toured that day.

I would like to start by saying that everything really looked good this year; they were very well maintained, and the plants were all very vigorous, despite the dry weather.

After introductions by Dr. Jeff Iles, Nick Howell and Dr. Ajay Nair, we started the tour at the Plant and Insect Diagnostic Clinic Tent, where we had an overview of the services provided, and how to access them. That was followed by an overview of the PFI (Practical Farmers of Iowa), IFVGA (Iowa Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association), and NC-SARE (North Central Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education). Also, Dan Fillius, the new Extension Field Specialist for Central Iowa was introduced.

The stops along the tour are as follows:

Pepper/cauliflower biochar study (photo upper right): This is the second year of this study. What it is showing is an increase in microbe activity and a decrease in demand for fertilizer. There was also discussion on using plastic mulch. Best approach for Iowa seems to be white on black. Silver on black provides good pest management.



Winter squash study (photo lower right): This study is looking at the effects soil mulch has on production. They are testing sugar levels in the squash in the plants grown on mulch vs no mulch. They are studying open pollinated vs hybrid squash, and collecting data on weeds. This study will help with production in Uganda.



3-sister intercropping system: This is not a new concept; in fact, the 3-Sister team is working with native growers on this project. The crops in this study are beans (provides nitrogen), corn (pillar), and squash (ground cover). The hypothesis is that the 3-Sister combination will boost soil health, water holding capability and improve the nutrient levels. The sisters are planted in groups of 4 corn, 4 beans, and 2 squash. Variety matters; not all sisters play well together. This is the second season for this study.

Vegetable and chicken integrated systems: The rotation starts with vegetable production. After harvest, the chickens move in. They provide insect control and nutrients. Following the chickens, cereal rye is planted. After the chicken cycle, they go to the food lab for testing. The study is also looking at 5 varieties of mini butternut squash, testing for sugar content and storage.

Weed management equipment study: Weed management equipment that is on loan from Europe was demonstrated. It might save a lot of hoeing and herbicide use.

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Protek net study in Winter Squash (photo upper right): This study is looking at using row covers to reduce dependence on insecticides. The issue with the row cover is pollination. The study is looking at the best ways to pollinate squash under the netting. Options include opening the end of the netting to allow pollinators in, and also moving a bee hive under the row cover during pollination. Included in the study is weed control, using landscape fabric, bare ground, and mowed vs. no-mow. For mowing, they remove the cover, mow and let the pollinators in for 2 weeks, then replace the cover.



Biodegradable plastic mulch study (photo center right): This study is looking at weed suppression, moisture management, how well the mulch works and breaks down by spring. The biodegradable mulch in this study was made from corn. They are also studying mulch with insecticides in the mulch. They are also testing the soil nutrition and the affects from the mulches. Light weight paper mulch works well, and work better than plastic on dryer soils.



New apple cultivars (photo lower right): The derecho took out 460 trees, and another 300 were tipped out of the ground. It is expected that many of those will also be lost. One of the lessons learned from the derecho is that the wires supporting the trees need to be better anchored in the posts. The belief is that the wind whipped the trees and the staples anchoring the wire to the post pulled out, allowing for more movement of the trees. The new orchard just planted this spring has the wires fed through holes in the posts.



The Midwest Apple Improvement Association (MAIA) is working on developing new apple cultivars. The MAIA home page describes the organization as "MAIA is an organization that was founded by growers and is maintained by growers to produce apple varieties that are available to all US and Canadian growers. Work continues to incorporate disease resistance and other favorable characteristics. Hard cider selections that can be produced in today's high density growing systems are also in the testing stage." Seven new cultivars have been released by the Association. This association is important because it will make more varieties of apples available to the growers at a reasonable cost.

Research includes disease prediction by tracking relative humidity, and then developing a fungicide treatment plan. Testing includes organic fungicides. This is the first year of research. After the discussion, there was a demonstration of a precision guided apple sprayer. The device mounts on any sprayer, and using GPS and a sensing device, controls when to spray. So, if a tree is missing, the sprayer shuts off as it passes that location, reducing wasted material. This will be a financial saving to the grower, as well as a benefit to the environment.

Honeybee research: The focus of this research is on honeybees in Iowa, insecticide drift, and the uptake of insecticides by the honeybees. The pressures on the honeybees includes pests, pesticides and pathogens. There are between 300 to 400 native bees in Iowa. The hort station has 45 hives.

Last stop was an excellent dinner!

September Library Talks

Hiawatha Public Library
150 W. Willman Street
Hiawatha, IA

(Masks are required to enter the library)

Thursdays / 6:30-7:30

September 2: Alliums are The Art & Soul of Spring and Summer (Deb Walsler)

I love Alliums!!! Flowering Onions are rabbit-, rodent- and deer-resistant, and are seldom affected by disease. Bees, butterflies and pollinators, love them. Allium extend the spring flowering season with bold, dramatic color and statuesque garden architecture.

September 9: Extending the Growing Season (Phil Pfister)

Enjoy home-grown early tomatoes and pick fresh broccoli from the garden for the holidays! Phil will discuss clever ways the home gardener can extend Iowa's growing season. Topics include utilizing cold frames, row covers, hoop houses, and other ingenious ideas to prolong your garden's productivity

September 16: Putting your Landscape to Bed (Wil Carew)

It's autumn. Time to clean up yard, landscape and gardens, but how do I start?" Join Wil as he covers what to do, when to do it, and why!

September 23: Outstanding Trees for the Midwest Home Garden (Mike Anderson)

Discover trees that make excellent additions to the home landscape. Mike will discuss his favorite picks for spring blooms, fall color, unique leaf shape, and trunk structure and growth habit.

September 30: Super Succulents (Rose Milden)

Succulents come in many different forms, colors, and sizes. They have adapted in many different ways in able to survive in harsh growing conditions. Come and find out about these super plants. You may even discover the reasons why succulents are great plants to grow in your own home.

Things We Love—The Limonaia (or Lemon House) of Boboli Gardens, Florence, Italy

By Jenniffer Dickens, Intern

I had the very fortunate opportunity to visit Italy in 2018, courtesy of the Coe College Concert Bands in celebration of my 30 years of performing with the bands. We toured Rome, Florence and Venice. This article is going to focus on Florence, Italy, my afternoon at the Boboli Gardens in particular.

I was thrilled to learn there was a garden behind the palace we toured in Florence, so bypassed most of the palace and headed straight for the gardens. At the bottom of the Isolotto there was the Limonaia (or Lemon House). The citrus scent was very heady as my co-musician Kathy, and I approached. Citrus is my favorite scent and yellow and green are my favorite colors, so I was ecstatic to find this Limonaia in the garden.



The Limonaia was commissioned from Pietro Leopoldo di Lorena by the architect, Zanobi del Rosso. It is European in style, not classical as it appears. There was a greenhouse on the space where the Limonaia now stands, but it was falling down and not nearly good enough for the next prince that was to take charge in the palace.



The garden on the outside grows hundreds of varieties of ancient roses in the spring and summer. There are also giant terra cotta pots around the garden and various spots in the entire gardens that hold the citrus trees.

The Limonaia is 100 meters long and 8 meters wide. The Limonaia contains rare citruses like the arancio scannellato (*citrus aurantium Caniculata*) that was brought to Florence by Fransisco I. The agruma Bizzaria (*citrus aruantium bizzaria*) is one of the rare citruses in residence and very odd looking.

The collection was begun by Cosimo I between 1554 and 1568. Cosimo I was the main contributor. He ended up with 116 varieties and later had the citruses painted by artist Bartolomeo Bimbi.

"Gardener at a Glance" - Meet Suzanne Oelschlaeger

By Beverly Whitmore

The month of September, the 9th month of the year, how can that be already? The veggies are abundant, in spite of the hot, dry weather...and the song..."Do you remember, 21st night of September" begins to play in our heads! Fall decorations are out in the stores, making many of us wanting to change our indoor decorations and even fill a garden cart with gourds, pumpkins, sunflowers etc., it's hard to resist the temptation, isn't it? Before I get too far ahead of myself, let me take this opportunity to introduce new Master Gardener, Suzanne Oelschlaeger.

Suzanne was born in Ohio, but has lived in Iowa since second grade. She lived in town, but her best friend lived on a farm south of Iowa City. When she was in high school, she talked her mother into letting her have a vegetable garden there. Her mom made her promise to keep it weeded. Among many things planted in the garden, she also put in a 25-foot row of zucchini! (She did not keep up with the weeding as she had promised!) And, little beetles were all over the raspberries; it was a lot of learning gardening the hard way.

Suzanne and her husband moved to Cedar Rapids in 1982. They raised their three children here. Suzanne taught art at Cedar Valley Christian School for almost thirty years. When she retired, she took the Master Gardener class, something she had always wanted to do!



She has gardened since her childhood. She brought wild rose plants home from a friend's farm and planted them in her mother's garden where they promptly took over. On family chore days, she volunteered to trim the privet hedge. Her sister felt it shouldn't count as a chore since Suzanne enjoyed it so much! She also tried making perfume by collecting peony petals. That was long before the internet and she had no idea how to extract the essence so it is no surprise her attempt failed...but she tried!

Most of Suzanne's gardening has been shade plants, but since last August, she is learning about sun-loving plants. She is hoping the hostas can hang on while the 18 new trees grow! She loves peonies, hydrangeas, day lilies, coreopsis and daffodils. They have planted mostly native trees. She is looking forward to see how the hophornbeams (*Ostrya virginiana*) grow because she had never had that species before.

Suzanne's favorite season is summer. She loves the way the air smells of warm grass and ripening corn. She also loves the sound of cicadas in the evenings and tree frogs at night. She doesn't mind the heat but she doesn't enjoy being sticky either!

So far this year, she has enjoyed working at Lowe Park, both in the greenhouse and in the gardens and enjoyed volunteering at the May plant sale. While volunteering at the plant sale she talked with another MG and learned about orchids. She took those tips home and her orchid is looking so much better!

Please welcome Suzanne!

Low Park Daylilies on the Move!

By JoEllen Funk

During the fall of 2019, the decision was made to move the daylily bed from the location by the building to a bed by the front sidewalk. Due to the lack of gutters, the prior bed did not allow the daylilies to flourish. In fact, many declined and did not need to be divided in the nine plus years that I have been involved with the daylily bed.

The first step was to remove the plants from the new site. Then the daylilies were removed from their bed and put in a temporary/plant sale clump bed at my property. A load of compost was brought in to fill the holes left behind. Please note that any daylilies that did not go back to Lowe Park were sold at the plant sale. All of the new additions to the beds were donations from my gardens.



The goals for the new bed were as follows:

- ◆ Focus on daylilies but also incorporate perennials and other pollinator plants for variety.
- ◆ Variety of daylily bloom types - single, double, spider, and unusual form. There is even a double bloom that is fragrant.
- ◆ Extend the bloom season by having early, mid, and late blooming daylilies.



Favorites in the Lowe Park daylily bed are: Hard Times (left), August Fire (center) and Foggy Bottom (right).

The first year (spring 2020) was spent getting daylilies into the bed and monitoring for self-seeded leftovers from the previous bed occupations. One of my favorite ways to rid beds of unwanted seedlings is to put newspapers down under mulch.

For the second year (spring 2021), siberian iris were added to a part of the bed that tends to be soggy at times. This fall will be spent assessing and adding new plants as there are still some spots to be filled. Part of the fun of gardening is moving plants around to find the best fit/location.

LCMG Steering Committee Meeting

Note: There was no Steering Committee Meeting held in August. The next meeting is scheduled as a Joint Steering Committee and Project Chairs/Co-Chairs Meeting on Wednesday September 1 at 6:00 pm at the Extension Office.

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Extension and Outreach

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