

Our newsletter is looking for a new name!

We are bringing together gardening & local food culture & want to hear your suggestions for a title that reflects that!

Please submit your suggestions to Margaret at mmurphy@iastate.edu by June 12 & have a chance to win a prize!

May 2015



Come Take a Tour

Tour the Village Northwest's greenhouse & learn about their modified hydroponic system used for growing tomatoes. The tour is free but pre-registration is required

Date: Friday, May 15th

Time: 1pm-2pm

Place: 330 Village Circle, Sheldon

Pre-register (asap) contact Margaret at (712) 472-2576 or mmurphy@iastate.edu

Problem Solvers

For trouble spots in our yards where grass just doesn't grow or the terrain makes it difficult to mow; think about alternatives like perennial groundcovers. Most spread quickly and can be used to carpet large areas of landscape.

Groundcovers come in a huge assortment. Whether your site is in full sun or full shade has dry conditions or moist you can find a variety that will work.

One problem they can help solve is covering ground under trees where turf is often hard to maintain.



Periwinkle, *Vinca minor*

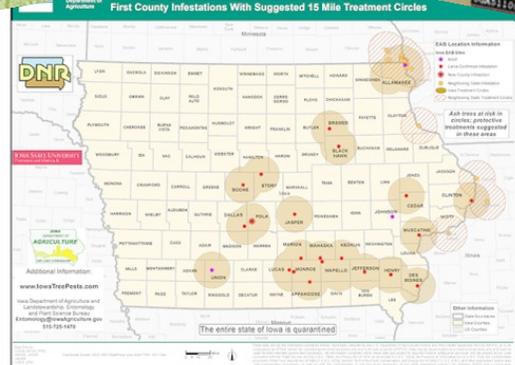
Placing groundcover under a tree also has the benefit of not needing to be mowed thus preventing possible injury to the trunk by

the lawn mower. Groundcovers will also help keep weeds away so there is no more temptation to weed whack around tree trunks.

Utilizing groundcovers in areas where turf is difficult to grow offers an opportunity to introduce a range of different colors, textures and form into the yard. It also cuts down on overall mow time and creates mow-free zones providing extra protection to wildlife.

Breaking News!

The emerald ash borer, the invasive beetle destructive to ash trees, has been positively identified for the first time in Polk County, Iowa, making this the 22nd county in Iowa where this invasive beetle has been found. For more information on emerald ash borer and related topics, visit the [ISU website on EAB](#).



The map shows confirmed reports of EAB. Each circle indicates a 15-mile radius, an area where ash trees are at risk of attack. It is suggested that homeowners decide which management option they will use to deal with the threat of EAB on their ash tree(s). For more on control options see ISU Extension & Outreach pamphlet [PM 2084, Emerald Ash Borer Management Options](#).

Learn it

Grow it

Teach it

Master Gardener News

Volunteer Service Opportunities

Master Gardeners have 20 hours of volunteer service each year to remain active. Here are a few upcoming opportunities that can help you get them:

Pizza Garden

Saturday May 16 come help plant a pizza garden at the Research and Demonstration Garden at the Lyon County Fairgrounds in Rock Rapids starting at 9:30am.

Straw Bale Gardening

We are demonstrating a straw bale garden at the Research and Demonstration Garden, Lyon County Fairgrounds, Rock Rapids, volunteers are needed to get the bales conditioned and planted. Begin last part of May—call for details.

Sioux County Extension office garden beds

Help plant the garden beds at Sioux County Extension office. Date TBD but if interested, please drop me an email or call.

Lunch on the Farm at Gerber Berries

Help organize and disseminate information for the lunch on Saturday, June 6 at Gerber Berries in Larchwood. Time on the tour through the strawberry patch counts toward continuing education as you'll learn about growing strawberries & drip-irrigation.

Continuing Education

Master Gardeners need 10 hours of continuing education each year to remain active. Here are a few upcoming programs that can be used for continuing education hours:

Greenhouse Tour at Village Northwest Unlimited

Friday, May 15. See page 1 for details

Session I of the Master Gardener Summer Webinar Series

Design from Yard to Trough featuring Lisa Orgler and Gary Whittenbaugh
Monday, June 8. See page 4 for details.

Pollinator Fest

Reiman Gardens will be celebrating [National Pollinator Week](#) with the first annual "Pollinator Fest" to be held June 20, 2015 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The event will include educational displays, guided pollinator identification tours, workshops and kid craft. For more information on the event visit the Reiman Gardens webpage at www.reimangardens.com

Horticultural Horizons in the Heartland

International Master Gardener Conference September 22-25 in Council Bluffs, IA
Please see page 4 for more information

*Check with me for other educational opportunities such as available webinars.

Call for Artists for 2015 All-Iowa Master Gardener's Art Show

New this year, entering the show is open to **all** Iowa Master Gardeners. The exhibition will be held at the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden, beginning with a reception on Monday, August 31, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Applications are being accepted now through August 1, 2015. Entries must have a horticultural, floriculture, or gardening theme and must have been completed within the last 3 years. In addition to Best of Category designation, selected art work will be exhibited at the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden's North Gallery from September 1 through November 16. For more information and an application click [here](#).

SIoux, O'BRIEN, LYON & OSCEOLA





Calendar MAY



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 Click here for information on apple scab	2
3	4	5 For all nursery plants go early in May for best selection, less stressed plants	6	7 Divide perennials that bloom in late summer or fall	8	9
10	11 Do not remove the foliage of bulbs (such as tulip or daffodil) until it yellows and dies	12	13 Pick off excess apple/pear blossoms or fruit for larger fruit	14	15 Thin seedlings to prevent overcrowding and weak growth	16
17	18 Remember to start fertilizing houseplants regularly	19	20 Direct seed outdoors easy, fast-growing annuals that like warmer weather, such as sunflowers, cosmos, nasturtiums, zinnias, and hollyhocks	21	22 Prune spring blooming shrubs after flowering	23
24 31	25 Memorial Day	26 Plant seedlings of warm-season vegetables such as tomatoes, peppers, and eggplant. Remember to harden off plants which are being transplanted outdoors	27	28	29 Plant summer-flowering tropical bulbs and tubers, such as cannas, elephant's ear, gladiolus, and tuberous begonias	30 

Handy Tips for the Garden

As we move forward into a new planting season, there are several steps one can take to make a garden more sustainable. A sustainable garden is one that thrives with minimal inputs of water, fertilizer and pesticides. This not only reduces environmental impacts but can also save us time, labor and money.

A good first step is to keep soils healthy. If the soil is healthy, your plants will get off to a good start and be more resilient to environmental stress or disease. Research links the majority of plant problems to poor soil. Soil benefits from the addition of organic matter. It improves the water and nutrient-holding capability of the soil. Plus, healthy soils often need less fertilizer.

Another area where we can practice good conservation habits is with reduced water usage. Choose plants with low-water requirements (once established). Avoid watering too frequently - wait until plants need watering then water deeply. Use mulch to help hold moisture and reduce evaporation. Water early morning instead of mid-day when much of the water is lost to evaporation. You can also save money by using rainwater captured in a rain barrel or cistern.

Lastly, when it comes to pest management, follow the old adage from Ben Franklin 'An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.' Pest prevention involves doing what you can to keep plants healthy and vigorous. Healthy plants have less risk of developing pest problems. You can also select insect and disease resistant plant varieties. Use barriers such as fences or row covers to exclude pests from access to your plants. In addition, plant a diverse garden. That way if a pest problem does arise, hopefully, the whole garden bed won't be in jeopardy. If a problem does develop, get a correct diagnosis before treating. It may be that treatment is not necessary or can be done without chemical inputs. If pesticides are needed, always read and follow the product label and avoid overuse by treating just the target area.

Garden & Local Food Events

(Stay tuned as more events are added)

Save the Date
&
Join the Fun

May

Greenhouse Tour at Village Northwest Unlimited

Come join the tour to learn about Village Northwest's greenhouse production of tomatoes using a modified hydroponic system. The tour is free but pre-registration is required (we need a head-count for tour leaders).

Date: Friday, May 15

Time: 1pm-2pm

Place: 330 Village Circle, Sheldon

Pre-register by Tuesday, May 12 by contacting Margaret at (712) 472-2576 or mmurphy@iastate.edu

June

Local Food Lunch

Come have lunch at Gerber Berries in Larchwood, IA and sample some tasty local fare featuring Gerber's strawberries. Meet Monte and Karla Gerber and take a tour of their U-Pick strawberry operation. Plus, enjoy fresh Berkshire wood-fired pork from Fly'n K Berkshires in Alford IA.

Date: Saturday, June 6

Time: 11:30am-1pm

Place: Gerber Berries, 2224 120th St, Larchwood, IA

Fee: \$15 per person, \$8 for children 6-12 & free for children under 6

Registration: Pre-register by Wednesday June 3 by contacting Margaret at (712) 472-2576 or mmurphy@iastate.edu

Iowa Master Gardener Growing Season Webinars- Session 1

Design from Yard to Trough – learn how to add spark to your landscape design and about trough planters filled with conifers and their companions.

Date: Monday, June 8

Time: 6 pm-8pm

Place: Hull Public Library, 1408 Main St., Hull, IA

Fee: \$5 per session or \$10 for the series

July

Iowa Master Gardener Growing Season Webinars- Session 2

Water in the Garden –Learn about various water saving techniques to apply in the garden plus, learn how to incorporate creative water features into your landscape.

Date: Monday, July 6

Time: 6pm-8pm

Place: Hull Public Library, 1408 Main St., Hull, IA

Fee: \$5 per session or \$10 for the series

ISU Research and Demonstration Garden Tour and Local Food Tasting

Enjoy a horticulturalist –led tour through the ISU Research and Demonstration Garden and taste some delicious locally-sourced food while you are there!

Date: Tuesday, July 21

Time: Starts at 6pm

Place: Lyon County Fair Grounds-Rock Rapids

Free and open to the public

August

Stay tuned for some fun activities at farmers' markets to celebrate **National Farmers' Market Week**—August 2 through August 8

Iowa Master Gardener Growing Season Webinars- Session 3 Pollinators & Growing Herbs –Learn about attracting bees, birds and butterflies. Then focus on growing harvesting and preserving culinary herbs.

Date: Monday, August 10

Time: 6pm-8pm

Place: Hull Public Library, 1408 Main St., Hull, IA

Fee: \$5 per session or \$10 for the series

September

Local Food Dinner– details to come!

Horticultural Horizons in the Heartland

[The International Master Gardener Conference](#) will be held September 22–25 at the Mid-America Center in Council Bluffs. The 3-day event is co-hosted by Iowa State University Extension and Outreach and the University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension, and features nearly 100 educational and hands-on workshops, nine tours of nearby gardens and attractions, and a gardener's trade show. The conference is open to the public. Early-bird registration is available till June 1. Read more in the [Iowa State University Extension & Outreach news release](#) from May 4, 2015.



horticultural horizons
IN THE HEARTLAND

International Master Gardener Conference
September 22–25, 2015

At the Farmers' Market

Learn more about our area's farmers' markets and the producers who sell at the markets

This month

Meet a producer with a passion for bringing farm-fresh meats to the farmers' market!



[Seven W Farm](#) is nestled within beautiful farmland near Paulina, Iowa. On the farm they grow certified organic row crops (corn, soybeans, oats and barley) plus, pasture-raised pigs and chickens with grass-fed and finished sheep and beef.

The Wilson family has a strong commitment to holistic management. When it comes to how decisions on the farm are made sustainability is a priority. When you talk with the Wilsons they will tell you "we love what we do and not only provide quality products, but bring you along with us as we learn and care for the land."

In 2005, Seven W Farm began to diversify what they raised and how they raised it. They turned much of their land into grassland just like the prairie of the past and started the transition to organic farming. "As a result, we began to see great improvement in the land and its ability to produce forage," states Torray, the Wilson's eldest son.

At the Market

The Wilsons have been selling through farmers' markets for over 20 years and have quite a variety of products that they bring to market including vegetables, baked goods, honey, flowers, farm-fresh eggs and meats.

The market for meat is coming along. According to the Wilsons, folks don't often think of the farmers' market as a place to buy meats so education is a big part of what they do. For market, they bring cuts of meat that sell for the season. During the grilling season, for example, steaks are popular. Around the holidays more roasts are sold.



Visit Seven W Farm at the Sheldon Farmers' Market at the 'Old Train Depot' on Old Hwy 60, Mondays 4:30pm-6:30pm & Fridays 11:00am-1:00pm.

GOOD THINGS grow at your
local farmers' market!



Photos by Kelcey Schroder Photography

The Buzz on Bees and Fruit

According to the USDA, when it comes to eating one mouthful in three directly or indirectly benefits from honey bee pollination. There is an extensive list of food crops that rely on pollination by bees in order to produce fruit or produce better fruit set and fruit quality if bees do the pollinating. This is true for many fruit and vegetable crops that we grow in northwest Iowa.

Take apples for example, the honey bee is responsible for about 90 percent of pollination. Apple production has a long history in Iowa and, in recent years, there has been a resurgence of home owner interest in adding apple trees to their landscape. While most cultivars exhibit some degree of partial self-fruitfulness, apples are considered to be self-unfruitful. They do best when planted with one or more other cultivars to ensure cross-pollination and fruit set.

Apples rely on insects, particularly honey bees, to transfer pollen from one flower to another. Bees fly from blossom to blossom collecting nectar and, in the process, pick up grains of pollen that stick to the tiny hairs on their body. As the bees travel from flower to flower and tree to tree, they are busy transferring the pollen from one flower to the next while gathering additional pollen along the way. One honey bee can visit up to 5,000 blossoms in a day!

Even with ample flower bud production, without proper pollination, fruit trees fail to bear a quality crop. For best pollination results, always plant at least two different apple cultivars that bloom at the same time. Most flowering crabapples will also pollinate a neighboring apple tree if in bloom at the same time. (For a list of cultivars and their bloom periods, see, [Fruit Cultivars for Iowa](https://store.extension.iastate.edu/) available free at the Iowa State University (ISU) Extension online store - <https://store.extension.iastate.edu/>).

Weather also plays an important part in pollination. Bees are most active when temperatures are above 60 degrees F. Cool, rainy, or windy weather reduces bee activity and pollination. Typically, two to three warm, sunny days are needed during bloom time for a good fruit set. For more information on fruit tree pollination and reasons why fruit trees may not bear fruit, see publications, [Tree Fruit Pollination](#), and [Why Fruit Trees Fail to Bear](#). Both are available at the ISU Extension online store.

Help Protect Bees

As many fruit tree and garden pesticides are toxic to honey bees, don't spray plants while they are in bloom. Also, avoid the use of pesticides when nearby plants that may attract bees are in bloom. If pesticides are needed, use those that are less toxic to bees and apply very early morning or late evening when bees are the least active. It's best to apply pesticides only after the flower petals have fallen. Keep in mind, that formulas such as granules and emulsifiable concentrates are safer to pollinators than wettable powders or dusts. For more information on bees and pesticides, see ISU Extension and Outreach publication, [Protecting Bees from Pesticides](#). Remember to always follow good cultural practices in your yard and garden as the first step in preventing or minimizing pest problems. For help with determining whether insects you may encounter this growing season are indeed pests, visit www.BugGuide.net.



To share questions, comments or submit an article

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