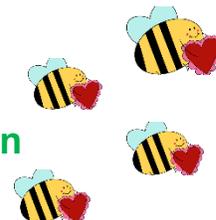
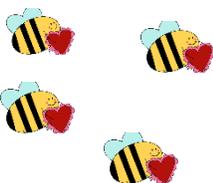


Garden to Table

News from the Yard, Garden and Locally Grown

February 2016



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In The News

Interested in Beekeeping?

Beekeeping classes for the public are taught by the State Apiarist and others and coordinated by the Iowa Honey Producers Association. The list for 2016 beekeeping classes is on the Iowa Honey Producers website: <http://www.abuzzaboutbees.com/downloads/2016-Iowa-Beekeeping-Courses-v2.pdf>. Visit the Iowa Honey Producers Association's website at <http://www.abuzzaboutbees.com/>.

Master Gardener Annual Volunteer Agreement

New for 2016 is an annual Master Gardener Volunteer Agreement. Do you plan to be an active MG in 2016? The first time during 2016 that you log in to the [Volunteer Reporting System](#), you'll be asked to check whether you intend to be an active volunteer for the year and check the box for the annual agreement.

2016 Year of the Begonia & More

The [National Garden Bureau](#) has decided that 2016 is the year of allium; the year of the begonia, the year of the delphinium & the year of the carrot! The National Garden Bureau was created in 1920 to provide basic backyard gardening instructions to suburbanites. During WW II, it promoted the idea of Victory Gardens & now focuses on community beautification.

I Spy ... backyard visitors but who?





February 2016



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Flavors of Northwest Iowa offers workshops throughout Feb—check out upcoming events (page 5)! 	1	2 	3	4 Enjoy a moment of browsing through seed catalogs!	5	6 
7	8 Have left over winter squash? Make butternut squash enchiladas	9	10 Got garden fever?	11	12 Sow geranium seeds indoors	13
14 Happy Valentine's Day! 	15  Presidents' Day	16	17 Have you ordered your garden seeds?	18 My pick for 'Vegetable of the Month' Beets!	19	20 
21	22 Make plans to start seeds indoors of cool season crops like cabbage	23 ISU Shade Tree Short Course-Ames	24	25	26 End of February rings in the season of pruning!	27
28	29 Happy Leap Year Day!	March 1 Food Security Mini Grant applications due.	2	3 Treat yourself to a new trowel or pair of gardening gloves	4	5
6 Cut branches of spring flowering trees for forcing indoors	7	8 Sow petunia & impatiens seeds indoors for May planting	9	10 Look for crocus 	11	12 Pour a cup of coffee & plan a vegetable garden

Volunteer Service Opportunities

If you like to do research...

- * **Create a Food Bank Directory for Lyon, O'Brien, Sioux & Osceola counties**
With the Iowa Master Gardener program addressing food access and food insecurity issues in 2016, we hope to have several local gardens available to donate food to local food pantries. So we need an **up-to-date directory of food banks/pantries in our area** with information on whether they accept fresh produce and /or are connected to gardens or want to be connected to a garden. The directory should include name of the food bank/pantry, organization (if any) that they are affiliated with, location, years service and principal contact person(s).

If you like to serve on committees 😊

- * **Volunteer on a committee to plan Master Gardener advance trainings, workshops, gardening events, meetings, etc.**
- * **Volunteer on a committee to plan local food-related events**
Examples include: farm to table dinner, farm to fork tour; food tastings at county fairs and/or farmers' markets; organizing an 'Ask a Master Gardener' table at a farmers' markets; other?

If you like to write...

- * **Write articles for Master Gardener newsletter**
- * **Help with local Master Gardener Facebook page**

Like to talk—I mean educate?

- * **Give gardening presentations to the public (resources available for you at the extension office)**
- * **Accompany horticulture educator on site visits to address yard and garden questions**
- * **Assist with answering yard and garden questions at county extension office**
- * **'Ask a Master Gardener'**
Set a time to answer gardening question at the ISU Demonstration Garden in Lyon County or at a participating farmers' market

Is photography your thing?

- * **Take pictures at Master Gardener-related events for newsletter and Facebook page**

Or, of course, gardening...

- * **In 2016, the ISU Demonstration Garden at the Lyon County Fairgrounds will be planting a pantry-friendly garden.** Master Gardeners can participate in a local food access project at this garden or feel free to create your own project (hopefully with mini grant funding). A few thoughts: secure a plot at a local community garden to grow food for a pantry; create a new garden for pantry donations; come up with a unique hunger project for your local area
- * **Garden Beds at Sioux County Office**
2 sun drenched beds and several shade tolerant pots need to be designed, planted and tended
- * **Raised bed of annuals ISU Demonstration Garden, Lyon County Fairgrounds**

Continuing Education

- * **Master Gardener Winter Webinars—Hunger in Iowa**
Dates: Monday, Feb 1, Monday Feb. 8, and Monday Feb. 22
Time: 6pm-7:30pm; **Place:** Hull Public Library, 1408 Main St., Hull, IA
Free and open to the public; Counts as continuing education for Master Gardeners. Call 712-472-2576 or email mmurphy@iastate.edu to confirm program happening, if weather looks dicey.
- * **Garden Shows**
Lawn and Garden Show: Sioux Falls: March 11-13 - W.H. Lyon Fairground 100 N. Lyon Blvd Sioux Falls, SD
Siouxland Garden Show: April 1-3 - Sioux City Convention Center, located at 801 4th Street, Sioux City, IA

Yard, Garden & Local Food

The Buzz on Honeybees

With the cold and flu season still at hand, many of us have been dealing with sniffles and chronic coughs. If you're like me, to feel better you might take refuge in a nice hot cup of herbal tea sweetened with a dollop of honey.

In our region, we are fortunate to have several folks who keep honeybees and sell their honey locally often at farmers' markets. I had the pleasure of visiting with one beekeeper, Marlene Boernsen, onsite where she and her family keep bees in Ocheyedan, Iowa. I was amazed at the wonderful things bees do.

According to Marlene, the limiting factor for how many hives to keep at one site comes down to the amount of available flowers bees need to collect nectar. Bees don't work every flower. They focus on yellow, purple and white colors. Marlene noted that for her hives some of the bees' favorite flowers include sweet clover, white Dutch clover and golden rod. Bees need to gather nectar from roughly two million flowers to create a pound of honey!

The hive has one queen and several drones (whose only job is to mate with the queen) but mostly it contains worker bees (they're the labor force). Within 15 seconds of emerging from her cell, the worker bee is doing her first job. Worker bees collect the nectar and build the honeycomb where the honey is stored. The honeycomb consists of perfectly shaped hexagonal cells. Cells for honey storage are filled one drop at a time. It takes 12 bees an entire lifetime to make one teaspoon of honey. Some of the busy worker bees fan the nectar with their wings to dehydrate it. When it's at just the right moisture level (about 18%) the cell is capped with wax. The honey will keep indefinitely inside the honeycomb.

As if producing honey wasn't enough, the worker bees, while out collecting nectar, are also busy pollinating many of our fruit and vegetable crops. "Bees pollinate our food. It's the most important thing they do. Honey is a bonus!" says, Marlene. As the bees travel from flower to flower they are busy transferring the pollen from one flower to the next while gathering additional pollen along the way. One honeybee can visit up to 5,000 blossoms in a day!

If you are interested in attracting pollinators such as honeybees to your garden this summer, here are a few helpful tips. Select a variety of flowers for the garden. Plantings that offer a mixture of colors, fragrances, and shapes throughout the growing season will entice a range of pollinators to your yard. Consider leaving clover that may spring up in your lawn. Limit pesticide use. As many garden pesticides are toxic to honeybees, don't spray plants while they 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.

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.

First Signs of Spring

Wildlife starts to get wild (for some anyway). February through March is mating season for the striped skunk. When males try to court females, uninterested females may respond with an aroma to repel them—and us. It's actually rather difficult to get sprayed by a skunk. They kindly gives us warning by stamping their front feet. If they stamp, take heed and walk away.

Skunks are non-aggressive, extremely near-sighted and have a keen sense of smell. They eat insects, mice and grubs, which makes them rather beneficial. However, when faced with a dog who doesn't take a hint - well, Fido might just get a pungent surprise. *Handy tip:* To de-skunk the dog: mix a quart of hydrogen peroxide with ¼ cup baking soda and a teaspoon of liquid dish soap. Bathe the dog in it and rinse. The odor should disappear in minutes.

Information provided by The Humane Society of the United States. For more information on skunks, please click [here](#).





Save the Date!

Upcoming Events

February

Monday February 1, 8, & 22

Master Gardener Winter Webinars

Time: 6pm-7:30pm

Place: Hull Public Library, 1408 Main St.

Free and open to the public

[For more information, click here.](#)

Tuesday February 2

MarketReady Workshop This workshop is for local food producers who currently sell their products direct to consumers & are looking to scale up to wholesale marketing to restaurants, grocery stores and institutions.

Time: Check-in at 9:30am, workshop 10am-4:30pm

Place: NCC Sheldon, Building A, Room 117

Fee: \$55/person; click [here](#) for more details

Tuesday February 9

Introduction to High Tunnels at Woodbury County Extension Office, Sioux City, IA. This class is intended for those who don't have or are just purchasing a high tunnel. Topics to be covered include site and high tunnel selection, construction, soil management, irrigation, pest management, bed design and cropping systems.

[For more information & to register, click here.](#)

Monday February 15

Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Level 1—for farmers who provide food direct to consumers through CSAs or

farmers' markets or considering retail foodservice sales and will be trained in good agriculture best practices and market considerations. [For more information, click here.](#)

Time: 8:30am-4:30pm

Place: NCC Sheldon, Building A, Room 117

Fee: \$55/person. [To register click here.](#)

Tuesday February 16

Flavors Forum: Join the discussion about cover crops & pest management by ISU Extension staff at county extension office in Woodbury County. Plus, time for open group discussion of local food producer topics of interest.

Time: 9:00am- 12:00pm

Place: Woodbury County Extension
4728 Southern Hills Dr, Sioux City, IA

Free of charge, pre-registration required by contacting Laurie Taylor at 712-276-2157 or email ltaylor@iastate.edu.

March

Tuesday March 15

Tree selection, planting & pruning seminar by Dr. Jesse Randall, ISU Extension Forester. Plus, update on emerald ash borer. Attendees are encouraged to bring questions & photos of their existing yard and/or windbreak trees. *Counts toward MG continuing education.*

Time: 6:30pm –8:00pm; **Place:** Plymouth County Extension office, 251 12th St., SE, Le Mars, IA

Free and open to the public. For more information or to register, call 712 546-7835 or email janelle@iastate.edu.

Food Security Mini Grants available to Master Gardeners

Connecting Gardens to Food Pantries & People to Gardening

The **Master Gardener winter webinar series** will focus on hunger in Iowa and how Master Gardeners can help. Watch all three webinars that focus on hunger in Iowa, working with food banks and best practices for food safety and be eligible to apply for a mini grant up to \$1000.

Mini grants are available to support projects related to growing food for food pantries, connecting gardens to food banks, and/or teaching food insecure people about gardening.

Grant applications are due March 1st, 2016. Click [here](#) for more information or, visit www.mastergardener.iastate.edu.

In 2016, the **ISU Demonstration Garden at the Lyon County Fairgrounds** will be planting a pantry-friendly garden. Master Gardeners wanting to participate in a local food access project are welcome to create a project at the Rock Rapids' site!

Quick Links

[Find us on Facebook](#)

[Iowa Master Gardener](#)

[MG Hours Online](#)

[Yard & Garden FAQs](#)

[Hort & Home Pest News](#)

[Flavors of Northwest Iowa](#)

[Questions or Comments](#)

For questions, comments or to contribute an article or photo

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