



At the Garden Gate



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
Extension and Outreach

August September
October 2020

Become a Master Gardener

Mahaska County Master Gardener Training to be Held Online this Fall—Application is open

Iowans who would like to expand their gardening knowledge and become community garden volunteers can do so by completing Master Gardener training this fall. Iowa State University Extension and Outreach in Mahaska County will offer Master Gardener training designed for those who are passionate about serving their communities and sharing gardening best practices.



Applicants must apply for the training before August 1, and complete the online sessions held by each participating ISU Extension and Outreach county office. **For the safety of our trainees and staff all classes in all counties will be held online due to the COVID-19 pandemic.**

Mahaska County online sessions will be roughly one hour Tuesdays Sept 8– November 10 at 7 pm. Trainees will watch topical videos on their own ahead of the sessions and complete other tasks prior to the online session.

“We have really enjoyed offering the Master Gardener training as a hands-on experience for the past few years,” said Susan DeBlieck, Master Gardener state coordinator with ISU Extension and Outreach. “While we’ll miss out on some of the hands-on learning, participants will still get to connect with people and resources in their community.”

Selected applicants must pay the class fee of \$185 (discounted \$10 by ISU Extension and Outreach) and complete 40 hours of plant education offered in the fall, and complete a 40-hour volunteer internship by the end of 2021. The fee is due before the start of the training. **Mahaska County Master Gardeners will award a \$45 enrollment incentive/scholarship to the first 6 enrollees to pay the class fee for Mahaska County. With the scholarship/enrollment incentive, the fee is \$140.**

To register visit the Iowa Master Gardener website (<https://www.extension.iastate.edu/mastergardener/become-master-gardener>) and apply online—or visit our office!

As an alternative option, those not interested in volunteering can register for the core course as a Pro-Hort trainee (\$550 fee) and receive a certificate upon completion of the training.

DeBlieck said it’s unfortunate that the classes cannot be in person, but that the online format will eliminate the need for travel. “Becoming a Master Gardener volunteer will be even more accessible for people who live far from ISU Extension and Outreach county offices and for folks who have children at home,” she said.

For more information, contact Suzette Striegel, Mahaska County Extension Horticulturist at the Mahaska County Extension Office, 212

Extension programs are available to all without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age or disability.

We are on Facebook-
“Like” our pages!



Mahaska County Master Gardeners

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach-Mahaska County

Garden Tips, Projects, Plant Highlights and More

Many days the Mahaska County Master Gardener Facebook page has a gardening tip, project, plant highlight etal posted. Many of the posts refer to an ISUEO publication or websites. Some are also posted to the Mahaska County Extension website. Check them out! If you would like more information about the posts, please contact Suzette Striegel, Mahaska County Extension Horticulturist.

Help Wanted

Gardeners: Your help is needed

Food insecurity has become a major community stress. It likely will not end as quickly as it began.

Please help. If you have extra produce, please check with local organizations (community food banks/pantries, meal programs, shelters, church/religious groups, etal) and family members, and people you know about donating.

Please follow the current COVID 19 recommendations including social distancing as you make the donations.

Horticulture Inquiries are still being answered

If you have a horticulture inquiry, please contact the Mahaska County Extension Office. You may stop at the office, call 641-673-5841 (extension 26) or email Suzette Striegel at striegel@iastate.edu. If you prefer, you may also drop off items in our dropbox or leave items outside the door (contact us first).

Other inquiries can be directed to same phone number and/or email xmahaska@iastate.edu.

Butterfly Gardening Resources

RG 601
Gardening for Butterflies

RG 603 Iowa
Butterfly and
Caterpillar Food
Preferences

PM 1795 Common Butterflies of Iowa

These publications are available at our office, some are available to download from the *ISUEO* online store <https://store.extension.iastate.edu>.

Farmers Market and U-Pick

Due to COVID 19 there have been changes to how Iowa Farmers Markets and U-Pick locations operate. Please continue to support local growers and enjoy fresh produce. Be sure to follow the current procedures and COVID 19 restrictions.

Also consider purchasing the "locally grown" labels at grocery stores. Many produce growers in Iowa sell to local grocery stores too!



Mahaska County Master Gardeners Meetings

Previously trained Master Gardeners in Mahaska County formed Mahaska County Master Gardeners in 2003. They meet monthly to plan horticulture speakers, events, workshops and activities. Their monthly business meetings are scheduled for **Tuesday, August 11, September 8, and October 13 at 6 pm at the Extension Office and by ZOOM.** *Current COVID restrictions and ISU Extension and Outreach policies may change meeting plans. Meeting details, including ZOOM link, will be included with agenda.*

Due to current COVID restrictions and ISU Extension and Outreach policies affecting meetings; Mahaska County Master Gardener events for the public in person following their meeting are currently not being scheduled. Master Gardeners hope to be able continue these educational opportunities again.

Tomato Fest will not be held

Ten years ago, the Mahaska County Master Gardeners held their first Tomato Fest. In years since, Tomato Fest was not held due to low garden production a couple of times. Due to current restrictions and ISU Extension and Outreach policies; it is not scheduled for 2020. Master Gardeners hope to be able continue this educational opportunity again.

MG Informational Booths will not be held

In past years, the Mahaska County Master Gardeners staffed monthly informational booths at Oskaloosa Farmers' Market. The Farmers Market is running with restrictions in 2020, the MGs hope to return in the future.

The Mahaska County Master Gardeners had an informational booth at the Nelson Pioneer Farm Fall Festival for a number of years. There is no Fall Festival in 2020. .

Youth Outdoor Field Day

Mahaska County Master Gardeners have led the Tree Identification station at Mahaska County Conservation's Youth Outdoor Field Day since 2016. **Currently Youth Outdoor Field day is scheduled for Saturday September 26.** See current news and promotional sources for specific information about this event.

Additional Events

Mahaska County Master Gardeners and ISU Extension and Outreach may schedule additional events in horticulture and other program areas (which may be of interest to gardeners) this fall. They will be publicized in local media, email, facebook, as well as our website.



Mushroom Guide Helps Foragers Identify and Understand Iowa's Bounty

Gathering mushrooms can be an enjoyable activity for families and individuals of all ages. In Iowa, mushrooms can be foraged from spring through late fall, providing a wide window of opportunity.

To help mushroom gatherers identify and understand the characteristics of Iowa's mushrooms, specialists with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach have published the "Safe Mushroom Foraging" guide.

This 80-page publication provides foragers guidance on the time of year each mushroom is available, its key characteristics, habitat and look-alike mushrooms. There is also information on common mushroom myths and best practices for searching for them in the wild.

Full-color photos help hunters identify more than 50 mushrooms, including those that are considered edible, not edible and poisonous.

"The guide is a great resource for people who want to hunt mushrooms on their own or with their children, as they look at different mushrooms and learn about their role in nature in the wild," said Lina Rodriguez-Salamanca, plant pathology diagnostician with the Plant and Insect Diagnostic Clinic at Iowa State University. "The guide focuses on the most common mushrooms and their look-alikes, as well as those that are edible and those poisonous to avoid."

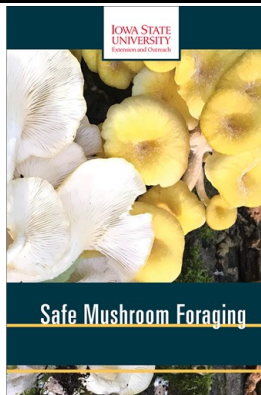
The guide includes a calendar showing which time of year each type of mushroom is likely to be found, and it offers best practices for gathering and storing methods.

Rodriguez-Salamanca is also featured in an instructional video on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P4He2ITRG3s>, provided by Integrated Pest Management at Iowa State.

The "Safe Mushroom Foraging" guide is available from the Iowa State Extension Store, for \$4 per hard copy, plus shipping and handling.

The guide was co-authored with Rosanne Healy, assistant research scientist at University of Florida and Iowa State alumnus, and Leonor Leandro, associate professor in plant pathology and microbiology at Iowa State.

Consumer awareness about foraging is important, and there are always risks associated with consuming wild mushrooms. A mushroom foraging webinar is being planned for **August 4 at 6 pm via zoom**. [Registration is open online](#). For more information or questions on the webinar registration, contact Katelyn Brinkerhof, program coordinator in Buena Vista County, at kbrink@iastate.edu.



ISU Extension (ISUE) Publications of Interest

PM 534 **Planting and Harvesting Times for Garden Vegetables**

PM 607 **Suggested Vegetable Varieties for the Home Garden**

PM 666 **Weed Management in the Home Garden**

PM 683 **Composting Yard Waste**

PM 731 **Harvesting and Storing Vegetables**

PM 820 **Garden Soil Management**

PM 1266 **Tomato Disease and Disorders**

PM 1932 **Drought Tolerant Annuals and Perennials**

PM 1398 **Harvesting and Drying Flowers**

PM 1966 **The Garden Guide to Midwest Annuals and Perennials**

PM 2036 **Ticks and Tick Borne Disease in Iowa**

PM 2086 **Growing Organic Vegetables in Iowa**

PSEP 59 **Home and Garden Pesticide Guidelines**

PSEP 60 **Toxicity of Common Lawn, Garden and Ornamental Pesticides in Iowa**

SUL 14 **Hosta Disease and Pests**

SUL 12 **Using Mulches in Managed Landscapes**

These publications (as well as many others) are available to purchase at the Extension office or at the ISUEO online store <https://store.extension.iastate.edu>. Many of ISUEO publications are available for download at the same site.

Gardening Guide

August

- Continue to harvest summer squash and cucumbers
- Stop fertilizing annuals
- Harvest onions when tops yellow and fall over
- Water newly planted trees, shrubs, and perennials as needed
- Sow grass seed
- Harvest potatoes when tops die
- Sow seeds of radish, spinach and lettuce for a fall crop
- Tour an Iowa winery

September

- Aerate lawns
- Water newly seeded lawn frequently
- Pot up hyacinth bulbs for forcing indoors
- Divide and transplant peonies
- Plant deciduous trees
- Leave asparagus foliage over winter
- Harvest green tomatoes before frost
- Check houseplants for insects before bringing indoors for the winter

October

- Harvest winter squash before hard frost
- Visit an Iowa apple orchard
- Dig up dahlias and cannas for indoor storage
- Apply broadleaf herbicides to control dandelions and other broadleaf weeds.
- Leave ornamental grass foliage over the winter
- Compost tree leaves
- Buy pumpkins from a local pumpkin patch
- Continue to mow lawn until the grass stops growing



These items are from the 2020 ISU Extension and Outreach Garden Calendar.

If you want more information about any of the Mahaska County Extension horticulture events or have horticulture questions, please contact Suzette Striegel, Mahaska County Extension Horticulturist by phone 641-673-5841 or email striegel@iastate.edu.

Garden and Green Bean Safety: Serve Up Fresh Produce, Not Foodborne Illness

Gardeners are busy harvesting fresh green beans. If you're wondering how you can enjoy this tasty vegetable year-round, consider canning. Vegetables, like green beans, are low acid foods that must be pressure canned to kill harmful bacteria and prevent spoilage. Pressure canning tends to scare people who are new to canning.



However, it becomes less scary when we learn more about it. The key to safe home food preservation is to find a tested recipe and follow the instructions carefully. Iowa State University Extension and Outreach uses the [National Center for Home Food Preservation website](#) and recipes and the United States Department of Agriculture's [Complete Guide to Home Canning](#).

For more detailed information on pressure canning, check out the ISU Extension and Outreach [Food Preservation 101](#) online class and the [Canning: Vegetables](#) publication for more food preservation information.

ISU Extension and Outreach will continue hosting weekly [Sow, Grow, Eat and Keep](#) quickinars. These quickinars will be 5-15 minute online lessons of seasonally appropriate topics for the garden, food preparation and food preservation.

Did You Receive an Unsolicited Seed Package Recently?

On July 28, 2020 Robin Pruiser, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) Ag Security Coordinator urged ANYONE who has received an unsolicited seed package to:

1. Do not plant the seed.
2. Do not open the packets.
3. Do not eat the seed.
4. Please retain the packaging and seed, once IDALS has directives from USDA they will likely be making arrangements to collect the seed for appropriate disposal.

Why?

1. The seed is unlabeled, and could be an **invasive plant** that does not currently exist in the US.
2. The seed may contain **seed-borne diseases** that we don't have in the USA.
3. Some packets appear to have an **unknown seed treatment** applied (seed treatments are usually an insecticide and/or fungicide). Because the packets are unlabeled we don't know what the compounds are, nor how dangerous they could be to human health.
4. Seed is an agricultural commodity that is regulated for **quality**

and content by the USDA as well as State Departments of Agriculture.

Why is this is happening?

It could be a brushing scam ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brushing_\(e-commerce\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brushing_(e-commerce))) where for whatever reason they are using seed, and sometimes, packages that contain nothing.

What to do if you receive unsolicited seed –

Contact the Iowa Department of Agriculture or USDA and report your contact information. Once we have a directive from USDA we will make contact with everyone and make appropriate arrangements.

IDALS 515-281-5321

Or, USDA 515-251-4083

ISU Extension and Outreach Resources:

Iowa Concern 1-800-447-1985

<https://www.extension.iastate.edu/iowaconcern/>

Email links on website by category

A source of help for Iowans in need:

Legal Finance Stress Crisis/Disaster
And COVID 19

Hortline 515-294-3108

Monday– Friday 10 am—Noon, 1– 4:30 pm

hortline@iastate.edu

www.yardandgarden.extension.iastate.edu/Hortline.htm

- *Note: Due to COVID 19 phone calls are not being answered currently, please send inquires by email.*

Plant and Insect Diagnostic Clinic

Information and opportunity to submit samples

<https://hortnews.extension.iastate.edu/pidc>

Phone: 515-294-0581 Email: pidc@iastate.edu

* *Note: Due to COVID 19 PIDC is implementing distance diagnostics as much as possible. Please send an email prior to sending physical samples.*

AnswerLine 800-262-3804

answer@iastate.edu; Monday– Friday 9 am–Noon, 1-4 pm

Questions relating to home and family

www.extension.iastate.edu/answerline

Preserve the Taste of Summer

<https://www.extension.iastate.edu/humansciences/preserve-taste-summer>

Food Preservation classes, workshops, publications and resources

Spend Smart Eat Smart

<https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/>

Recipes, budget-friendly meal planning, exercises, blogs, & how-tos

Storing Onions

After harvesting the onions, dry or cure the onions in a warm, dry, well-ventilated location, such as a shed or garage. Spread out the onions in a single layer on a clean, dry surface. Cure the onions for two to three weeks until the onion tops and necks are thoroughly dry and the outer bulb scales begin to rustle. After the onions are properly cured, cut off the tops about 1 inch above the bulbs. As the onions are topped, discard any that show signs of decay. Use the thick-necked bulbs as soon as possible as they don't store well. *An alternate preparation method is to leave the onion tops untrimmed and braid the dry foliage together.*

Place the cured onions in a mesh bag, old nylon stocking, wire basket or crate. It's important that the storage container allow air to circulate through the onions. Store the onions in a cool, moderately dry location. Storage temperatures should be 32 to 40 degrees Fahrenheit. The relative humidity should be 65 to 70 percent. Possible storage locations include a basement, cellar or garage. Hang the braided onions from a rafter or ceiling. If storing the onions in an unheated garage, move the onions to an alternate storage site before temperatures drop below 32 F.

...If the storage temperatures are too warm, the onions may sprout. Rotting may be a problem in damp locations. Inspect the stored onions on a regular basis in fall and winter. Discard any that are starting to rot.

Source: <http://www.extension.iastate.edu/article/yard-and-garden-onions-and-garlic>



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Extension and Outreach

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~Office Hours~
Monday—Friday
8:00 am—1 pm, 1:30—4:30 pm



Don't miss out!

August 1—Deadline to register for the
ONLINE Master Gardener training.

Start your registration at [https://
www.extension.iastate.edu/
mastergardener/become-master-
gardener](https://www.extension.iastate.edu/mastergardener/become-master-gardener)

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