



At the Garden Gate



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
Extension and Outreach

February March April
2021

Hort coffees to be held

Mahaska County Extension Horticulture staff offered horticulture coffees last winter and resumed them this winter. However there are a few differences!

- 1) they are moving to the first Wednesday (December– March) at 10 am
- 2) there will be a theme to each session
- 3) they will be virtual

So, if horticulture topics interest you, register and join our Hort Coffee/Virtual Café zoom meeting(s).



Upcoming Dates and themes are: February 3 Composting and March 3 Seed Starting—with Master Gardener Linda Spears.

To register for the zoom call Mahaska County Extension Office 641-673-5841 or email Suzette Striegel (striegel@iastate.edu) by **Noon the day before. Those who register will receive a zoom link and handouts.**

Zoom isn't our favorite method of learning about our favorite subject -gardening– but during COVID it is a popular way to meet without worrying about social distancing and it allows for us to learn with...

- no weather or parking issues
- better view of the computer screen
- individual volume control
- casual dress
- comfortable chairs
- great choices in beverages and snacks during the presentations
- use of your own bathroom
- all the while saving gas and commuting time!

Please contact our office if you are unfamiliar with zoom & wish to join!

Iowa Concern Hotline 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

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).

They will be publicized in local media, email, Facebook, as well as our website.



**PLANTING A GARDEN
WITH FOOD POTENTIAL
IS ONE OF THE MOST
VALUABLE THINGS WE
CAN DO.
– ISABELL SHIPARD**



Seed to Supper

Are you a beginner to vegetable gardening or a gardener who wants to learn more? Seed to Supper is a series of educational presentations about vegetable gardening being offered by the Mahaska County Master Gardeners, free and open to the public. Due to COVID restrictions,

it will be offered by zoom, with recordings available after the event.

The ISU Extension and Outreach publications covering the basic vegetable gardening topics will give the gardener the information needed to grow a portion of their own food on a limited budget. Participants are not required to attend/watch all four sessions.

Dates and topics for the Mahaska County Master Gardeners' Seed to Supper at 6 pm are:

- February 4** Planning Your Vegetable Garden
- February 25** Healthy Soil (Compost & Mulch)
- March 18** Planting and Caring For Your Garden (including container gardening)
- April 8** Caring For and Harvesting Your Garden (including recipes)

Register by Noon the day before.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider. For the full non-discrimination statement or accommodation inquiries, go to www.extension.iastate.edu/diversity/ext

Due to Richard Jauron's retirement, Hortline is currently not functioning.

Please visit the ISU Extension and Outreach publications and websites for desired information. If you can not find an answer for your inquiry, please contact Suzette Striegel at the Mahaska County Extension office.

Horticulture Inquiries are still being answered at Mahaska County office

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 or email our staff.

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

Email: answer@iastate.edu;

Monday– Friday 9 am-Noon, 1-4 pm

Questions relating to home and family

www.extension.iastate.edu/answerline

Facebook page: AnswerLine



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, February 9, March 9 and April 13 at 6 pm at the Extension Office and/or by ZOOM.**

ISU Extension removed the limitations on the number of attendees at events effective January 25. However, other COVID-19 precautions still apply: face coverings are required, maintain six feet physical distance, wash your hands, and stay home if you are sick.

We have calculated the Mahaska County Auditorium capacity at 25 with social distancing. Many of our Master Gardener hosted events have more than 25 attend, so we will continue to have Zoom programs until COVID precautions change or we can be outside.



Year Round Indoor Salad Gardening

Come learn from Master Gardener Krysta Wendelboe, about how you can grow salad—year round—indoors **Tuesday, February 9 at 6:30 pm.** It is easier than you think! Due to current ISU Extension and Outreach restrictions, this presentation will be held by Zoom. **Register by Noon February 8.**

Ten Gardening Mistakes & How to Avoid Them

Whether you have been a gardener for two days or twenty years, mistakes in the garden are sometimes inevitable. There are some mistakes, however which can easily be avoided. Learn how to avoid some common ones this gardening season from Mahaska County Master Gardeners by Zoom **Tuesday, March 9, at 7:00 pm.** **Register by Noon March 8.**

Container Flower Gardening

Learn how to create and care for container flower gardens from Mahaska County Master Gardeners by Zoom **Tuesday, April 13, at 7:00 pm.** Additionally, Ken Broadway, Mahaska County Master Gardener will provide a how to for constructing large planters from discarded tires. **Register by Noon April 12.**

Community Garden kick off will not be held

Normally Oskaloosa Community Gardens schedule a kick off meeting to aid those wanting to find a space for a gardening plot. But we are prioritizing the health and safety of all and not scheduling the event in person in 2021. Yet all three community gardens in Oskaloosa have spaces available for those wanting to plant a garden but lacking an appropriate site.

To inquire about available spaces, please contact the coordinators of the community garden sites.

The community garden sites and coordinators are: **Hope Gardens (New Hope)**- Blaine Vos 641-676-1601 oskyhope@gmail.com; **OCSD Glendale Gardens**- Ron Van Heuvelen 641-660-4329 rveuvelen@gmail.com; and **William Penn Gardens**- Marsha Riordan 641-673-1044 riordanm@wmpenn.edu. Each site has its own amenities, rules and costs. All site coordinators encourage potential gardeners to make arrangements for a plot by the end of March.

Save the Date: Plant Sale May 15

The Mahaska County Master Gardeners Plant Sale is scheduled for Saturday, May 15; 8-11 am. It will be cancelled or otherwise changed depending on the current COVID restrictions.

Gardening in the Air

Gardening in the Air is a series of virtual gardening presentations on Saturday January 30 and February 6 co-hosted by University of Illinois Extension and Iowa State University Extension. Presentations will be on a wide variety of timely gardening topics about winter gardening activities, wildlife, food and nutrition, design, vegetables, fruits and herbs, and houseplants.

Sessions will be hosted on Zoom with three sessions each at 9 am, 10:15 am and 11:30 am. Participants may register for a single session or more. Sessions are free to attend, but a donation is appreciated. Access links and handouts will be provided upon registration.

Siouxland Garden Show

Will be virtual again in 2021. Friday February 19-March 26 there will be presentations at 10 am and 3 pm. For more information visit <https://www.siouxlandgardenshow.org/>

Monarch Conservation Webinars

The Monarch Joint Venture (MJV) partners with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to develop webinars on monarch biology, monitoring, and conservation. To register for and see a list of upcoming webinars, go to their events page. The webinars are recorded and available for viewing 2-3 weeks after they are held. <https://monarchjointventure.org/events>

Please revisit the virtual education offerings highlighted in previous newsletters for new additions.

Gardening is the art that uses flowers and plants as paint, and the soil and sky as canvas.
- Elizabeth Murray

Gardening Tip: Make your Garden Markers as you order and/or purchase seeds.

ISU Extension and Outreach Publications of Interest

PM 212 **Landscape Plants for the Midwest**

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

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

PM 820 **Garden Soil Management**

PM 874 **Starting Garden Transplants at Home**

PM 2004 **Home Landscape: Understanding the Basics of Landscape Design**

IAN 302 **Iowa's Spring Wildflowers**

PM 1204 **Morels, False Morels, and Other Cup Fungi**

PM 1429f **Power Lines and Trees**

PM 1942 **Annuals**

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

PM 2004 **Home Landscape Design**

PM 2063 **Sustainable Home Landscapes**

RG 105 **Garden Tips-Guidelines to Seasonal Chores**

RG 318 **Early Spring Blooming Perennials**

RG 319 **When to Divide Perennials**

RG 501 **Pruning Raspberries**
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



February

- Assemble seed starting supplies
- Check houseplants for insects
- Order Valentine's Day flowers
- Sow geranium seed indoors
- Clean houseplant foliage with sponge and warm water
- Begin pruning fruit trees

March

- Plan vegetable garden on paper
- Sow seeds of broccoli, cabbage and cauliflower indoors
- Sow impatiens seeds indoors
- Force spring-flowering branches indoors
- Prune grape vines and raspberries
- Begin fertilizing houseplants
- Remove dead asparagus growth

April

- Cut back ornamental grasses
- Remove mulch from strawberries
- Sow seeds of peas, lettuce spinach, carrots and beets
- Plant pansies outdoors
- Plant potatoes
- Prune yews
- Divide perennials as new growth emerges
- Deadhead tulips after flowering
- Plant a tree

These items are from the 2021 ISU Extension and Outreach Garden Calendar.

Garden Calendar Is Available!

Copies of the 2021 calendar (HORT 3027) are available at our office for \$7; they also can be ordered directly from the Extension Store.

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



Garden Seed/Supply Ordering/Purchasing Tips

Many vegetable gardeners were frustrated this past spring when garden seeds (crowns, tubers and transplants) and other supplies became harder to purchase by mail order and at garden centers. So, how does a gardener prepare for gardening in 2021? The same as in previous years; but earlier. Your choices in seed and supply sources can be your personal preference, exercise it!

First and foremost, determine what you want/need to order/purchase. This involves planning your garden on paper, calculating space and seeded quantity needed and an inventory of your current seed supplies. Don't forget to indicate succession and fall plantings in your plans. There are many great resources which help you in determining the space and seed quantity needed for a desired crop amount; use one you like.

- Research new-to you crops, making sure they will grow in your environment.
- Make a desired crop list, and then do a reality check to make sure you have space and time for all items.
- Keep in mind, some crops will have plenty of options on racks at stores. Some will not.
- Remember you can split packages with fellow gardeners if you/they do not need a whole package.
- If a seed swap is held nearby, you might enjoy attending as they are great opportunities to obtain hard to find seeds (often heirloom) and meet fellow gardeners.
- Cover crops and winter gardening (if you do); supplies should be included in your plans.

Second, determine who has the items you need/want. Some gardeners are specific about wanted varieties/cultivars. Not all companies carry the same varieties/cultivars, but often have similar ones. It is often easier to order from one or a few companies (or shop a couple of garden centers) instead of several.

Keep good records of crop/variety performance. There is no reason to repeat a crop/variety which was not enjoyed.

Companies tend to carry items which do well in their region. Keep this in mind as you look at offerings from companies from outside your region.

If a company is new to you, research them before placing an order. Time spent checking out a company pays off if problems are avoided. Guarantees, and refund/return policies should be clear. Shipping costs should be easily calculated/specified. If communication with the company isn't easy, save yourself the headache and order from another.

Compare the prices, based on quantity. Different companies package their items differently. Some sell by weight, others by number, which should be specified. Calculate the price so you are comparing equal measurements.

Prices for a seed packet can vary greatly. They are based on seed production, a company's customer service, packet size, and other factors. Seeds in commercial trade are regulated for purity, noxious weed seeds and germination rates. Particular species and cultivar seeds from different companies should produce the same results independent of which company produced the seed packet or its price.

Wonderful photos are not required on seed packets or in catalogs for the company to be worth ordering from. Some companies do not have paper catalogs (websites only) and even large companies may not include all items in their paper catalogs—check the internet for additional companies and items.

Set a budget. Your seed/supply expenditure amount should take into account how much of your grocery budget the seeds will replace. Setting a budget will guide you in focusing on vegetables important to your family. Some expenditures will result in large amounts of produce while others provide higher cost/value produce potentially resulting in greater benefit. Analyze the potential seed/supply expenditures based off your family's eating habits. Uneaten produce is wasted money and time.

Consider shipping costs. Buying from multiple sources can mean higher costs. If your order is large enough, you may qualify for free shipping. Consider sharing an order with a gardening friend to lower your costs. Seeds and supplies purchased from racks at stores/garden centers and local sources do not have shipping fees.

Buy more than you need, ONLY IF you can store the seed until the next growing season in a cool dry location. This can be a great option for seed for crops which store well, especially if there is a price break. If you store leftover seed; consider adding a desiccant pack (or dry milk in a paper towel packet) for extra protection.

Make plans to start saving your own seed on open pollinated crops in which you enjoy a specific variety. Follow recommended seed saving procedures. Select the best plants to save seed from. Do not save seed from weak or off-type plants or hybrid varieties.

Be a savvy garden seed shopper:

...remember **there currently are no Genetically Modified (GMO) seed for home vegetable gardeners.** Cross pollination in garden seed production by businesses is a very small possibility.

...remember **only those preparing for or maintaining organic certification have to use organic seed (if available).** Organic seed is often sold at a premium and your gardening methods are more of the total picture than how the seed was produced. Only pay the premium when justifiable.

This article was written by Suzette Striegel, Mahaska County Extension Horticulturist.

Horticulture and Home Pest News

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

Weed Identification Fact Sheets

<https://crops.extension.iastate.edu/encyclopedia/weed-identification-fact-sheets>

Emerald Ash Borer Information

<https://www.extension.iastate.edu/psep/emerald-ash-borer-eab>

Woodworking for Wildlife

New free downloadable publications with plans for Aldo Leopold bench WL11, bat box WL 9, bluebird box WL10, and/or wood duck box WL12 from <https://store.extension.iastate.edu/>

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

**We are on Facebook-
"Like" our pages!**

Mahaska County Master Gardeners

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach-Mahaska County



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.

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Extension and Outreach

~Mahaska County Office Staff~

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Wellness Specialist
Sherry Ford, Regional Extension
Education Director

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

Upcoming events

February 3	10 am Hort Coffee-Composting
February 4	6 pm Seed to Supper #1
February 9	6:30 pm Year Round Indoor Salad Gardening
February 25	6 pm Seed to Supper #2
March 3	10 am Hort Coffee-Seed Starting
March 9	7 pm 10 Gardening Mistakes and How to Avoid Them
March 18	6 pm Seed to Supper #3
April 8	6 pm Seed to Supper #4
April 13	7 pm Container Flower Gardening

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