



Meeting Date Change: The Mahaska County Master Gardener Meeting will be **Monday May 14 at 6 pm** at the Mahaska County Extension and Outreach Office.

Mahaska Health Partnership Hospice Serenity House Landscaping Tour

Monday, May 14 at 7 pm

Come and enjoy a guided tour of the landscaping at Mahaska County Hospice Serenity House (630 North 12th Street, Oskaloosa). Our tour will be guided by Kim Lambert, director Mahaska County Hospice and Janelle Randau, The Garden Planner. **There is no cost for the tour and it is open to the public.**

“Gardeners are-let’s face it- control freaks. Who else would willingly spend his leisure hours wrestling weeds out of the ground, blithely making life or death decisions about living beings, moving earth from here to there, changing the course of waterways?

The more one thinks about it, the odder it seems; this compulsion to remake a little corner of the planet according to some plan or vision.”

**-Abby Adams,
What is a Garden Anyway**

Mahaska County Master Gardener Plant Sale

Saturday May 12, 2012; 8-11 am

Mahaska County Extension Office,
212 North I Street, Oskaloosa

Featuring: Annuals (flowers & vegetable)
As available: Perennial divisions, garden produce,
EON Garden Markers and
Second-Time-Around gardening items
including books, cookbooks, & periodicals

Proceeds will be used to support future activities
and speaker fees.

Many Mahaska County
Master Gardeners events
are open to the public
without cost because of
Plant Sale proceeds.



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Remember us this spring

As you are cleaning up your flower beds this spring, please keep the Mahaska Master Gardeners in mind; and pot up a few items for sale at the Master Gardener Plant Sale May 12th. Our Plant Sale customers prefer labeled plants (variety/ color); please provide this information if possible.

We would like the divisions to be in pots a week or two before the sale. They may be dropped off at the Extension Office anytime May 11th.



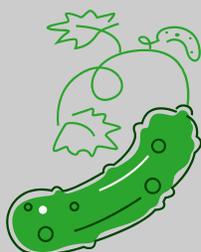
When can I plant cucumbers in the garden?

Cucumbers are a warm-season crop. Plant cucumbers after the danger of frost is past and soil temperatures have warmed to 60 to 70 degrees F. In central Iowa, cucumbers may be planted in mid-May. Gardeners in southern Iowa can plant one week earlier. Plant one week later in northern portions of the state. The last practical date to sow cucumbers is July 20.

Cucumbers are normally planted in "hills." Plant four to five seeds per hill at a depth of one inch. Later, remove all but two or three plants per hill when seedlings have one or two true leaves. Hills of cucumbers should be spaced three to five feet apart within the row. Rows should be four to five feet apart. For bush varieties, a three-foot spacing between hills and rows should be adequate.

Source:

Ask an ISU Extension Gardening Expert
April 16, 2008



Home Food Preservation 101 Will Be Presented

Home Food Preservation 101 will be offered **Wednesday, May 23 at Noon and at 2 pm** at the Mahaska County Extension and Outreach Office.

Barbara Anderson, ISU Extension Family Nutrition Specialist will present the workshop. It is intended for those wanting to learn how to safely preserve food. It will also serve as a refresher for those who have experience preserving food. Since 2006, there have been new canning recommendations that everyone should be aware of when canning at home. Participants will receive current Iowa State University Extension food preservation publications and learn about a new program, Preserve the Taste of Summer.

There is no cost to attend this program and it open to the public. You may bring your lunch with you. Please register by Noon on Monday, May 21 if you would like to attend. Register by calling 641-673-5841 or emailing rouletc@iastate.edu. More information may be found at www.extension.iastate.edu/mahaska.

Leaf Casting Workshop

Join Master Gardener John Langstraat and other Mahaska County Master Gardeners for this hands-on two session workshop to create your own leaf casting. **The first session will be held Tuesday, May 29, 2012 at 6 pm.**



Leaf casting is a process that creates cement molds from plant leaves. The natural depressions and veins in a leaf are captured in detail in the cement. The beautiful leaf castings can be used as bird baths, stepping stones, or attractive garden ornaments. Smaller leaf castings can even be used for nut bowls or other table decorations.

Materials and instructions will be provided for everyone to cast a leaf. Casting will occur at the Southern Iowa Fairgrounds. **Participants will also attend the second session Thursday, May 31 at 6:30 pm at the Extension office.**

Participants are encouraged to dress for our task, and bring gloves for working with concrete.

Participants are to bring their own leaf. Leaf possibilities include: rhubarb, hosta, burdock, grape, elephant ear/caladium, cabbage, calla lily. Please bring the leaf attached to the stem, with the stem in a bucket of water. Cost of the workshop is \$5 to cover the cost of the concrete. **Registration is required. To register, please contact Suzette Striegel by email (striegel@iastate.edu) or phone 641-673-5841.**

Garden Goodness Summer Webinars Announced

The Iowa Master Gardener program is once again offering a series of summer webinars. The 2012 series titled "Garden Goodness" will be hosted by Iowa State University Extension county offices on the fourth Tuesday of the month, May through August.



Each session will provide information about vegetable gardening, but from a variety of perspectives. "We selected 'Garden Goodness' as our theme for the 2012 series because of the current public interest in growing food," said Jennifer Bousset, Iowa Master Gardener and webinar series coordinator. "We want to introduce our participants to as many aspects of growing food as we can during these sessions." Dates, presenters and topics for the 2012 series are:

- **May 22, 6:30-8:30 p.m.** Ajay Nair – Growing Vegetables. Nair is an ISU Extension horticulture specialist.
- **June 26, 6:30-7:30 p.m.** Angie Tagtow – Food Gardening and Health; and 7:30-8:30 p.m. Denise Fikes – Glenwood's Giving Garden. Tagtow is an environmental nutrition consultant; Fikes is the Mills County Extension horticulture assistant.
- **July 24, 6:30-7:30 p.m.** Linda Naeve – Peoples Garden Project and Working with Youth; and 7:30-8:30 p.m. Cindy Haynes – Edible Ornamentals. Naeve is an ISU Extension value added agriculture specialist; Haynes is an associate professor in the Department of Horticulture and an ISU Extension consumer/urban horticulture specialist.
- **August 28, 6:30-8:30 p.m.** Angela Tedesco – Top Ten Sustainable Gardening Tips from Turtle Farm. Tedesco is owner of Turtle Farm, an organic vegetable, fruit and herb CSA near Granger, Iowa.

The series, in its third year, is offered by Iowa Master Gardener program in response to requests for more Iowa gardening educational opportunities. The sessions are open to all interested gardeners; participants are not required to have completed Master Gardener training to attend, however the session will fulfill Master Gardener continuing education requirements.

Cost to attend is \$5 per person. RSVP to the Mahaska County Extension Office by the Friday before the webinar is scheduled.

If we do not have 5 attendees we will cancel.

For the May22 webinar, RSVP by Friday May 18.

ISU Extension (ISUE) Publications of Interest

PM 607 Suggested Vegetable Varieties for the Home Garden

PM 608 Tomatoes

PM 719 Rhubarb in the Home Garden

PM 819 Planting a Home Vegetable Garden

PM 870b Container Vegetable Gardening

PM 944 Asparagus in the Home Garden

PM 1239 Growing and Drying Herbs

PM 1707 Growing Grapes in the Home Garden

PM 1888 Peppers

RG 301 Growing Annuals in Containers

RG 302 Edible Flowers

RG 317 Annual Vines

RG 319 When to Divide Perennials

RG 323 Cannas for the Home Landscape

RG 801 Growing and Using Basil

PM 1788 Growing Fruit in Iowa

RG 601 Gardening for Butterflies

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



- Acclimate seedlings to outdoor conditions before planting.
- Thin seedling of lettuce, carrot and radish
- Sow corn and bean seeds in the garden.
- Don't remove tulip or daffodil foliage until it yellows
- Plant a lilac for Mom

May 13 Mother's Day

- Plant brightly colored flowers to attract pollinators
- Remove excess plant debris from ponds or water features
- Mulch around newly planted trees and shrubs
- Pinch mums to promote compact growth and more blooms.
- Frame pictures of your garden flowers in view later in the season

May 28 Memorial Day

- Stake or cage indeterminate tomatoes

These items were taken from the 2012 ISU Extension and Outreach Garden Calendar.

The May meeting for Lil' Gardeners Clover Kids and Junior Gardeners special interest 4-H Club is date and time to be determined.

We will meet at the Lacey Gardens, weather permitting. If weather is inclement, we will meet at the office. Please indicate to Suzette if you will be or are interested in attending.

Lil' Gardeners and Junior Gardeners are special interest 4-H clubs. If you are already a member of one 4-H club in Mahaska county, you do not pay an additional enrollment fee to join. If only joining one of these 4-H groups, you will need to pay the enrollment fee (\$15 for Lil' Gardeners and \$30 for Junior Gardeners). For more information, please contact Suzette Striegel at the MCEO.

Be a Savvy Garden Shopper

As much as you love to garden and to shop for your garden there are ways to make the experience better. Here are some tips to consider prior to leaving for your garden's next shopping trip.

Know your budget as well as the "not to exceed" figure. It will make the summer much more enjoyable if you are not regretting spending beyond your means.

Take a map with you. Code the map with conditions to remember (ie: sun and wind exposure, drainage, height restrictions etc.). Scale, accuracy and detail of your map depends on you. However, the map needs to include measurements.

Know your botanical names if possible. It removes the possibility of different names for same plant and different plants with the same name.

Make a list of desired plants/colors & be flexible. If you know your conditions you can make substitutions easily that you will enjoy.

Remember to check your tool and supplies you may need also. It is not fun to return especially for tools and supplies before you get to plant your wonderful purchases.

Shop early. This is in the season and in the day. Consider going on week days. Late in the day is an option as well.

Shop around. Not all plant sources carry everything you want and need. One store may have the varieties of vegetable transplants or seed you desire while another may be where you get your perennials or fruit trees. Remember, different stores within chains may not get their plants from the same sources.

Check the plants. Look for insects and general health. Remember short, squatty and green are healthy. Check all the tags in a flat. Sometimes an individual cell pack can get moved in with others that are alike.

Ask. Businesses like to stay in business and happy customers will return. So let them know what you are looking for, etc.

Dress appropriately. There will be water, wet soil, branches that may snag clothing. Do not wear items that you want to keep away from that environment.

Drive sensibly. Take the vehicle with lots of room that can get dirty! Take along your own plastic sheet or tarp to protect the interiors of your vehicle.

It is possible to grow peanuts in Iowa!

While peanuts are grown commercially in the southeastern United States, they can be grown in Iowa. Their unique growth habit makes them a fun addition to the home garden.

Peanuts grow best in loose, well-drained soils. Avoid wet, poorly drained sites and clay soils. Plant peanuts after the danger of frost is past. Peanuts require a soil temperature of 65 F for germination. Sow peanut seeds 1 to 1.5 inches deep and 6 to 8 inches apart. Rows should be spaced 24 to 36 inches apart. Suggested varieties for home gardens include 'Spanish,' 'Early Spanish,' 'Virginia Improved' and 'Jumbo Virginia.' Peanuts are warm-season annuals that require a minimum of 120 frost free days to reach maturity.

The flowering and fruiting of peanuts are unique. Flowers are borne above ground, but the pods develop below ground. Peanut plants bloom about 30 to 40 days after emergence. The flowers are small, bright yellow and pea-like in appearance. After pollination and fertilization occurs, the stalk (peg) below the fertilized ovary elongates and curves downward. It takes about 10 days for the peg to penetrate into the soil. A week after soil penetration, the peg tip enlarges and pod and seed development begin. The fruit mature in 9 to 10 weeks with favorable temperatures and moisture conditions.

Harvest peanuts when the foliage begins to yellow in late summer or early fall. Dig up the plants with a spading fork and carefully shake off the loose soil. Cure the peanuts in a warm, dry shed or garage. After the plants have dried for 1 or 2 weeks, pull the pods from the plants and dry the peanuts for an additional 1 or 2 weeks. Once dried, place the pods in mesh bags and store them in a cool, well-ventilated place until roasted.

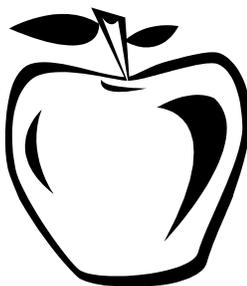
*Modified from Ask an ISU expert May 2, 2007
This is a fun gardening project for kids!*



Several apples have formed on a newly planted fruit tree. Can the apples be allowed to mature or should they be removed?

It's generally best to remove all fruit that form on apple trees during their first three growing seasons. Removal of the fruit maximizes plant growth and increases yields in later years. Removing the fruit also may prevent limb breakage on young trees.

*Source: Ask the ISU Extension
Gardening Experts May 2, 2007*



Are there any Rabbit Proof Plants?

Are there any herbaceous ornamentals that would be safe from hungry rabbits?

The feeding habits of rabbits often vary due to fluctuations in the rabbit population, availability of alternate foods and other factors. However, there are a few annuals and perennials that rabbits usually ignore.

Annuals rabbits seldom damage include ageratum (*Ageratum houstonianum*), wax begonia (*Begonia semperflorens-cultorum*), vinca (*Catharanthus roseus*), spider flower (*Cleome hassleriana*) and geranium (*Pelargonium x hortorum*).

Perennials seldom damaged by rabbits include lady's mantle (*Alchemilla mollis*), columbine (*Aquilegia spp.*), astilbe (*Astilbe spp.*), garden mum (*Chrysanthemum x morifolium*), bleeding heart (*Dicentra spp.*), hardy geranium (*Geranium spp.*), daylily (*Hemerocallis spp.*), Siberian iris (*Iris sibirica*), bee balm (*Monarda didyma*), daffodil (*Narcissus spp.*), peony (*Paeonia hybrids*), Russian sage (*Perovskia atriplicifolia*), moss phlox (*Phlox subulata*), perennial salvia (*Salvia x superba*) and speedwell (*Veronica spp.*).

*Modified from Ask
an ISU Expert
May 2, 2007*



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

Upcoming Events

~Mahaska County Office Staff~

Suzette Striegel, Horticulturist

Bob Wells, Agricultural Economics Specialist

Amy VerMeer-Brainard, County Youth
Coordinator

Cheryl Roulet, Office Assistant

Ranae Banicky, Early Childhood Education
Coordinator

~Office Hours~

Monday—Friday

8:00 am—1 pm, 1:30—4:30 pm

May

- 12 *Plant Sale 8-11 am*
- 14 *Master Gardener Meeting 6 pm
Tour of MHP Hospice Serenity House
Landscape 7 pm*
- 22 *Webinar—Growing Vegetables 6:30 pm*
- 23 *Home Food Preservation 101
Noon and 2 pm*
- 29 *Leaf Casting, first session 6 pm*
- 31 *Leaf Casting, second session 6 pm*
- TBA *Lil and Junior Gardener*

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