



# At the Garden Gate



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY  
Extension and Outreach

May June July 2020

## Master Gardener Plant Sale Cancelled for 2020

Beginning mid-March; Iowa State University Extension and Outreach cancelled in-person events throughout the state, and has since extended the cancellations through May 31. Included in these events was the Mahaska County Master Gardener Plant Sale scheduled for May 16.

This would have been the sixteenth annual Mahaska County Master Gardener Plant Sale. This popular event is a major fundraiser for the volunteer group. However, many attend the sale as customers and there were over ten Mahaska County Master Gardener volunteers working. It would be hard to limit the room to less than ten people at any given time.

Additionally, many customers and Master Gardener volunteers fall in to the population that the COVID 19 pandemic protocols we are currently living with are designed to protect.

The event has been held in the Mahaska County Extension office auditorium all but one of those years; with EVERY table in use at the start of the sale holding plants and items for sale. Tables were set up in lines with access from both sides. There would have been no room for social distancing.

Mahaska County Master Gardeners also postponed speakers scheduled during this time. When it is safe to gather again, they hope to reschedule those speakers. As we learn more and as events are rescheduled, we will add posts to our website and Facebook pages.

Master Gardeners are volunteers for Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. They are planning to hold a training for new volunteers beginning in late August. If you are interested in becoming a Master Gardener, please contact Suzette Striegel, Mahaska County Extension Horticulturist [striegel@iastate.edu](mailto:striegel@iastate.edu), 641-673-5841.

More information regarding horticulture programming can be found at the Mahaska County Extension Office; 212 North I Street; Oskaloosa Phone 641-673-5841; and [www.extension.iastate.edu/mahaska/yardgarden.htm](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/mahaska/yardgarden.htm).

## Make Plans to Enroll in Master Gardener Training this fall!

Mahaska County will offer Master Gardener training this fall. Classes will be Tuesdays August 25- November 24 with class on ISU campus Saturday October 10. Cost will be \$195. More information



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*"One of the healthiest ways to gamble is with a spade and a package of garden seeds."*  
Dan Bennett

## Speakers and Events we hope to reschedule include:

- Pickle Creek Herbs
- The Amazing Fungi of Iowa
- Container and Patio Vegetable Gardening and Preparing for the Gardening Season
- All About Asparagus
- Sand Dunes Field Trip

They will be rescheduled when ISUEO is able to have in person events. We also hope to schedule additional events in horticulture or other program areas (which may be of interest to gardeners).

We will publicize in local media, Facebook pages as well as our website. [www.extension.iastate.edu/mahaska](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/mahaska)

We are on Facebook-  
"Like" our pages!

*Mahaska County Master Gardeners*

*Iowa State University Extension and Outreach-Mahaska County*



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

## Horticulture Inquires are still being answered

If you have a horticulture inquiry, you may still contact the Mahaska County Extension Office. The office is currently closed to the public due to the COVID-19 situation. But you may still phone or email, please be patient when waiting for a response.

Contact the office at 641-673-5841 (extension 26) or email Suzette Striegel at [striegel@iastate.edu](mailto:striegel@iastate.edu). Other inquires can be directed to same phone number and/or [xmahaska@iastate.edu](mailto:xmahaska@iastate.edu).

## Garden Tips, Projects, Plant Highlights and More

Each weekday 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 website. They 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.

## Community Garden Plots still available

Community gardening is on the rise in Oskaloosa! In 2020, plots are still available at the community gardens in Oskaloosa.

Community Garden sites and the facilitators at the sites in Oskaloosa include:

- OCSD Glendale Garden, Ron VanHeuvelen (641-660-4329) [rvheuvelen@gmail.com](mailto:rvheuvelen@gmail.com))
- Hope Gardens, Blaine Vos (641-676-1601) [oskyhope@gmail.com](mailto:oskyhope@gmail.com))
- William Penn Garden, Marsha Riordan (641-673-1044) [riordanm@wmpenn.edu](mailto:riordanm@wmpenn.edu))

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available at the Mahaska County Extension Office. Enrollment begins by registering online at the Iowa Master Gardener website <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/mastergardener/become-master-gardener> and is due by August 1. *If needed, we will make adjustments to comply with the current COVID 19 social distancing and gathering restrictions at the time of training.*

**Different Format for training:** Core training will be webcasts (viewed on your own) and face to face sessions with activities (field trips/tours, games, etal) related to the topics. Face to face sessions will be on Tuesday evenings beginning at 5:30 pm\* and last 1-3 hours. Topics covered range from lawn care; flower and vegetable gardening; ornamental trees and shrubs; fruit crops and houseplants to insect, disease and weed control; soil; plant nutrition and pesticide safety.

\* Subject to change after field trips and tours are complete

\*\*Enrollment is not complete until background screening is submitted and class fee is paid to Mahaska County Extension Office.

\*\*\*Mahaska County Master Gardeners will cover \$45 of the class fee for the first six to pay the class fee in Mahaska County in 2020.

In exchange for training, participants are asked to volunteer 40 hours of service to the local extension program. "Their service opportunities are wide ranging," said Striegel.

## Mahaska County Extension Garden Challenge

Clover Kids, 4-Hers and all other gardeners\* are invited to participate in the Mahaska County Extension Garden Challenge. It runs from May 1– September 1; is for in ground and container gardens and vegetable and flower gardens. Prizes will be awarded for each level and type of garden and overall winners will be selected in each division. Full details are available at our website and office.

Thursday September 10 is the scheduled showcase for the garden challenge projects.

\* Mahaska County Extension council and office staff, Master Gardeners, Clover Kid and 4-H leaders are ineligible.

## Mahaska County Master Gardeners Meetings

The May 12 meeting is cancelled. If we are allowed to have in person gatherings, the monthly business meetings are scheduled for Tuesday, June 9 and July 14 at 6 pm. If held, the June and July meetings will be followed by a public program. Watch for news releases. *If needed, we will make adjustments to comply with the current COVID 19 social distancing and gathering restrictions.*

The June meeting is officer elections, committee sign ups, and meeting day/time establishment. If we are unable to meet, we will have a alternative meeting, with details sent to members.



## Southern Iowa Fair July 20-25, 2020

Information for 4-Hers exhibiting horticulture at the Southern Iowa Fair is in the fair book or the website: [www.extension.iastate.edu/mahaska/page/4-h-fair-award-forms](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/mahaska/page/4-h-fair-award-forms). **4-H Horticulture Judging is Tuesday, July 21, 2-4 pm.** *4-Hers may sign in beginning at 1:30 pm and must be signed in by 3 pm.*

**All ages of local gardeners are encouraged to exhibit at the Open Floral & Horticulture Show. Entries are received on Wednesday, July 22, 8-10 am. No early entry is necessary.** Fairbooks and entry lists are available at the Southern Iowa Fair office or the website [www.southerniowafair.com](http://www.southerniowafair.com).

**Resources available at our office or ISU Extension website <https://store.extension.iastate.edu> include:**  
**4-H 462 Harvesting and Preparing Vegetables for Exhibit**  
**4-H 464 Preparing Cut Flowers and Houseplants for Exhibit**

## Farmers Market and U-Pick

Due to COVID 19 there will be changes to how Iowa Farmers Markets and U-Pick locations operate. Please continue to support local growers and enjoy fresh produce, but follow the new procedures and follow current COVID 19 social distancing and gathering restrictions. Currently, the Oskaloosa Farmers Market plans to open May 16.

## Soil Testing Resources

In December 2017 the Iowa State University Soil Laboratory closed its doors. Due to continued need for soil testing services by our clients, we are now forwarding our clients to the University of Minnesota Soil Testing and Research Analytical Laboratory. This is because it is a public university and is indicated as a convenience, you have the free choice to choose a different university laboratory or private lab.

A free paper copy of the resources listed below is available as a Soil Testing Kit at the Mahaska County Extension Office. The indicated pages are also available on our website.

The first step is to take the soil sample(s). [Instruction Sheet for Taking a Soil Sample](#). Samples maybe contained in a quart freezer zip style bag.

After taking a soil sample from your yard or garden, you will need to print and fill out a [Soil Sample Submission Sheet](#). Send this sheet along with your soil sample(s) and the fee, to a soil testing laboratory. This form is for The University of Minnesota, you may choose another laboratory. A list of certified labs in Iowa is found at Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) website, commercial fertilizer page.

After a few weeks, you will receive a soil sample report from the laboratory. This is an example [Example Soil Test Report](#).

## ISU Extension & Outreach Publications of Interest

- HORT 3081 Growing Annuals in Containers
- HORT 3082 Growing and Using Basil
- HORT 3084 Peppers
- HORT 3091 Tomatoes
- PD 54 Tomato Diseases and Disorders
- PM 534 Planting and Harvesting Times for Garden Vegetables
- PM 683 Composting Yard Waste
- PM 717 Growing Strawberries in the Home Garden
- PM 820 Garden Soil Management
- PM 1942 Annuals
- PM 1966 The Garden Guide to Midwest Annuals and Perennials
- PM1889 Onions
- PM 2004 Home Landscape Design
- PM 2036 Ticks and Tick Borne Diseases in Iowa
- PM 2063 Sustainable Home Landscape
- RG 326 Growing Impatiens
- RG 314 Growing Petunias
- RG 324 Zinnias
- RG 601 Gardening for Butterflies and Pollinators
- RG 603 Iowa Butterfly and Caterpillar Food Preferences
- 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

### May

- Acclimate seedlings to outdoor conditions before planting
- Purchase a rain gauge to assist in watering decisions
- Plant tomatoes, peppers, and eggplants outdoors
- Plant nasturtiums for edible flowers in salads
- Place tropical hibiscus outdoors
- Pinch chrysanthemums to promote compact growth
- Prune spring flowering shrubs after flowering
- Add grass clippings to the compost pile

### June

- Mow lawn higher in June, July and August
- Stake tomatoes
- Sow a second planting of sweet corn and beans
- Weed garden beds and borders
- Stop harvesting rhubarb and asparagus
- Cut flowers in the morning and place into water immediately
- Join an area garden tour, note landscaping ideas
- Dead head geraniums to encourage more blooms

### July

- Freeze fresh fruit for later use
- Harvest zucchini and other summer squash when small and tender
- Wear a garden hat when working outdoors
- Consider a ground cover instead of grass in shading areas
- When watering with sprinklers, water in the early morning so foliage can dry
- Harvest herbs for drying before they bloom
- Take a water bottle along when working outdoors
- Remove suckers from the base of fruit trees
- Dig and divide bearded iris

*These gardening tips are from the ISU Extension and Outreach Garden Calendar.*



For any questions in relation to taking and submitting a soil sample, please contact Suzette Striegel, at the ISU Extension and Outreach Mahaska County office by email [striegel@iastate.edu](mailto:striegel@iastate.edu) or phone 641-673-5841.

## 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](mailto:hortline@iastate.edu)

[www.yardandgarden.extension.iastate.edu/Hortline.htm](http://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](mailto: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](mailto:answer@iastate.edu); Monday– Friday 9 am-Noon, 1-4 pm

Questions relating to home and family

[www.extension.iastate.edu/answerline](http://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

**“Life already has so many boundaries and pressures  
- why add more in the garden?”  
Felder Rushing**

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## Garden Project: Make your own Mixed-plant Hanging Basket

For more information consult Growing Annuals in Containers HORT 3081 from <https://store.extension.iastate.edu/>

**Obtain a Basket.** You can purchase new or use a basket from previous years can be reused if cleaned and rinsed in 10% bleach solution.



**Fill basket with soil-less potting media.** Allow room for plants, ending soil height should be within 1-2 inches of rim.

**Add plants.** Tallest plant (thriller) should be in center with medium height plants (filler) should be in area between center and edge. Overhanging plants (spiller) should be on edge. Choose plants needing same growing conditions and a variety of textures, colors and bloom styles. Alternative: Plant the basket with multiples of the same plant. If you are unsure of combinations, look at baskets ready for purchase for inspiration.

**Add additional soil if needed and water thoroughly.**

**Hang in place.** Water as needed, checking more than once a day when hot and windy.

## Steps To Make Tomato Cage

If possible, have plenty of room!

**Safety Tip –Remember to wear long pants, long sleeve shirt, leather gloves, eye protection, and closed shoes.**

1. With weight on the end and both sides of where cutting on the wire mesh, cut the mesh to the desired length.  
For 18” diameter cut a 5 foot length.  
For 24” diameter cut a 6 foot length.

*Tip – always cut at the end of the square so one edge is a vertical line and the other edge has the horizontal prongs.*

2. Hook the horizontal prongs into the vertical line edge to create a cylinder.
3. If desired, remove the bottom rung to form vertical prongs to push into the ground.
4. Anchor the cage with a stake beside the cage or between two or more cages and tying the cage to the stake/another cage. (Unless, wind is not a problem.)
5. Place stems inside the cage as the plant grows.



Cages can be stored outside during the winter. They stack well.

*Tip - 18” cages can be stored in 24” cages.*

*\*Instead of concrete reinforcement wire mesh other woven wire can be used if the opening is large enough for your hand (6x6). Other types of woven wire can be used also, if soft enough to work with. If the wire is galvanized it will be more expensive but will not rust as quickly.*

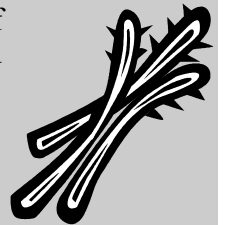
*Illustration from Purdue University Extension HO-26-W*

## Gardener's Tips

### Time to stop the harvest!

Many of us enjoy asparagus and rhubarb each spring. They are the earliest garden crops to be harvested, but must be given a chance to rebuild their food reserves for next year.

Generally the middle of June is when we should stop harvesting. It is a good time for a good weeding and addition of nitrogen fertilizer also.



### Deadheading to get more flowers during the season

A flower's goal is to produce seed. If you deadhead (remove the spent flower) an annual plant before the seed is set, it will produce a new flower (or flowers) in its place in an effort to produce seed. Continually deadheading annual flowers will get you a longer flower show.

### Use “1-2-3” cuts to prune

If your trees receive storm damage this summer, remember to use the 3 proper cuts when pruning. This method is outlined in SUL 5. The three steps for branch removal are:

1. Undercut to prevent bark stripping
2. Removal of the majority of the branch
3. Removal of the stub with a final cut outside the branch collar.

**Gardening is a matter of your enthusiasm holding up until your back gets used to it.**

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](mailto:striegel@iastate.edu).

# IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Extension and Outreach

## ~Mahaska County Office Staff~

**Suzette Striegel**, Horticulturist  
**Amy Brainard**, County Youth Coordinator  
**Ashtin Harris**, 4-H Youth Program Assistant  
**Lea DeCook**, Office Assistant  
**Charles Brown**, Agricultural Economics Specialist  
**Sherry Ford**, Regional Extension Education Director

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

# Help Wanted

## Gardeners: Your help is needed

Due to the current uncertainty many now live in; food insecurity is a major community stress. It likely will not end as quickly as it began.

**Please help.** If you have extra produce, please donate it (community food banks/pantries, meal programs, family members, people you know, shelters, church/religious groups, etal).

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

If you have the time and an outlet (ask before you grow) for the harvest of increased plantings; increase your garden plantings. If current COVID 19 recommendations allow, mentor other gardeners in your community.

# IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Extension and Outreach

## Mahaska County

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[www.extension.iastate.edu/mahaska](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/mahaska)

