



# At the Garden Gate



IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY  
Extension and Outreach

November, December 2019  
January 2020

## Barnswallow Flowers and Produce Speaker

Join us as we hear from Meredith Nunnikoven about peonies, dahlias et al as cut flowers on **Tuesday, November 12 at 6:30 pm** at the Extension office. The Mother-Daughter team of Kerrilyn & Meredith Loynachan Nunnikhoven launched Barnswallow Flowers and Produce. Located on Highway 23 east of Oskaloosa, the farmstead provides farm fresh flowers and produce to Oskaloosa and surrounding counties.

The floral CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) provides weekly bouquets designed within a day of delivery. Most arrangements include vegetables, such as kale and basil. They also donate a bouquet each CSA week to a deserving individual or organization, highlighting local personnel and services that are the backbone to community foundation and development.

Barnswallow Produce, the newer half of the business, provided a limited variety of vegetables to local restaurants in Mahaska County. With their knowledge from growing sweet corn in the 80's & 90's, they supplied chemical-free tomatoes, peppers, beets, carrots, squash, basil and pumpkins. Their collaboration with the chefs sought to reduce waste in season.

Barnswallow Flowers and Produce practices environmental consciousness and care amidst the farm operation. They believe in a model that supports the investment in their farm, local community, and local commerce. The blooms on their farm are clearly seen from the highway, serving as a visual representation of best farming practices, providing awareness of the local growing season and continually setting a positive example for farm family growers and operators.

**This event is FREE, open to the public and for anyone wishing to learn about the topic. Prior registration is NOT required, but appreciated.**

## Wreath Making Workshop

Start the holiday season by creating a fresh wreath for your front door at the Mahaska County Master Gardeners' wreath-making workshop on **Monday, December 2 at 6:00 pm**. Workshop will be held at the

*(Continued on page 2)*

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## Herbal Tea Time and Workshop



Join us as we host Master Gardener Lois Harris in a Herbal Tea Time and workshop and on **Tuesday, November 19 at 6:30 pm** at the Extension office.

Lois will present on herbal history and uses. We will also have a teatime followed by a workshop in which take home projects will be made. There is no charge for this presentation; it is open to the public for anyone wishing to learn about herbs.

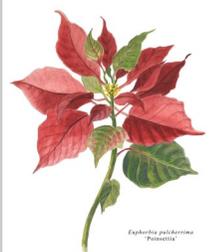
**Prior registration is required and limited to 25.** To register please call the Mahaska County Extension office 641-673-5841 or email [striegel@iastate.edu](mailto:striegel@iastate.edu) by Noon Friday, November 15.

## Holiday Plant Care

Come learn about holiday plant care from the Mahaska County Master Gardeners on **Thursday, November 21 at 6:30 pm** at the Extension office. We will be discussing poinsettias, amaryllis, Holiday cacti, and forced bulbs.

Garden Basics classes are Mahaska County Master Gardeners presenting on a variety of general gardening topics. Each one is an independent topic presented as a family friendly presentation. **They are**

**FREE, open to the public and for anyone wishing to learn about the topic. Prior registration is NOT required, but appreciated.**



*Euphorbia pulcherrima*  
Poinsettia

## Before you order...



To avoid disappointment when you purchase garden items from mail order catalogs, ask yourself these questions.

**Who am I ordering from?** Buy from reputable companies. Gardeners are willing to share their experiences, ask.

**What am I ordering?** Sometimes the write up is written to appeal, but may not indicate the less than favorable attributes of the plant. Also, look for a Latin or scientific name as many plants share a common name. This way you will know what you are ordering.

**Where is the plant going?** Wonderful plants will not do well in the wrong environment. Plants need to fit the site. Make sure the plant fits for sun/shade levels, soil conditions, as well as your landscape considerations.

**Will it grow here?** Hardiness is an important factor for trees, shrubs, and ornamental plants. Buy for your zone, as well as your microclimate.

**Does the plant have specific needs?** Be honest in the amount of time you have to take care of the plant(s). If the plant requires pruning, deadheading or pest control do you have time to complete the task?

*This article was prepared by Suzette Striegel, Mahaska County Extension Horticulturist*

(Continued from page 1)

Extension office. Please allow two hours to make a wreath.

Workshop materials include fresh boughs (White Pine, Norway Spruce, and Balsam Fir) which will be used to fill a 14" wreath frame.

Attendees are encouraged to bring unusual greens, cones, fruits, assorted decorations, ribbon and/or your favorite ornaments to include on their wreath. Attendees

will also need to bring gloves to wear, scissors, and hand pruners. Attendees may also bring the wire frame from past workshops to use.



**Prior registration with payment is required. Cost is \$15 per wreath made. Workshop is limited to 20.** To register to attend call Mahaska County Extension Office 641-673-5841 or email Suzette Striegel ([striegel@iastate.edu](mailto:striegel@iastate.edu)) by **Noon November 27**. The fees for service will be used to offset direct expenses and to support the Agriculture and Natural Resources County Extension Program.

## Gardener's Show and Tell

Join the Mahaska County Master Gardeners on **Thursday January 23 at 6:30 pm** for Show and Tell. They will be talking about their garden tools/plants-varieties/tips/how-tos/recipes/etc. from the 2019 growing season. The public in attendance is invited to share their items as well!



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## First Friday Coffee Break

Stop by the Mahaska County Extension Office on **Friday, November 1, December 6 and/or January 3 from 9:30-10:30 am**; fill up a cup of coffee and indulge in something tasty! This time is set aside for those who would like to visit and talk to others about horticulture topics. It will be a perfect time to learn about upcoming programs and events.

Registration is not required. There is no fee for coffee and treats, please bring your own cup to help reduce waste. If you have questions, call the Mahaska County Extension Office at 641-673-5841.



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

- Mahaska County Master Gardeners
- Iowa State University Extension and Outreach-Mahaska County

## Mahaska County Master Gardeners Meetings

Mahaska County Master Gardeners monthly business meetings will be on **Tuesday, November 12 and January 14 at 6 pm** at the Extension Office. The January meeting will be the annual celebration.

## All Bugs Good & Bad Webinars

All Bugs Good and Bad are monthly webinars presented nationally by eXtension. They provide practical information utilizing Extension staff across the nation. Mahaska County Extension will host a viewing of the upcoming webinar **Friday, November 1 at 1 pm.**

The topic is **Spiders Commonly Found in Houses.** Spiders can be found almost anywhere - indoor closets to outside dwellings - and in the soil too. These 8-legged beneficials often get a bad rap. Vicky Bertagnolli, Clemson Extension, will talk to us about identification, ecology, and management of our commonly found spiders.

Prior registration is requested by Noon the day of the webinar. To register please call the Extension office 641-673-5841 or email [striegel@iastate.edu](mailto:striegel@iastate.edu). *All Bugs Good and Bad webinars are archived.*

## Soil Testing Resources

**Information on how to take a soil sample in your lawn or garden.**

In December 2017 the Iowa State University Soil Laboratory closed. Due to the continued need for soil testing services by our clients, Mahaska County Extension is now forwarding our clients to the University of Minnesota Soil Testing and Research Analytical Laboratory. This is a public university and as a convenience, you have the free choice to choose a different university laboratory or private lab. [Soil Testing Resources](#)



A free paper copy of the resources listed below is available as a Soil Testing Kit at the Mahaska County Extension Office. Links to these resources are also on our website <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/mahaska/news/soil-testing-resources>.

The first step is to take the soil sample(s). [Instruction Sheet for Taking a Soil Sample](#)

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 <https://iowaagriculture.gov/commercial-feed-and-fertilizer-bureau/commer...>

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

## ISU Extension (ISUE) Publications of Interest

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

PM 820 **Garden Soil Management**

PM 874 **Starting Garden Transplants at Home**

PM 1078 **Harvesting and Storing Apples**

PM 1319 **Forcing Flower Bulbs**

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

PM 2063 **Sustainable Home Landscapes**

HORT 3080 **Growing Holiday Cacti**

RG 309 **The Griffith Buck Roses**

RG 310 **Caring for Roses in Iowa**

RG 311 **Growing and Overwintering Tender Perennials**

RG 316 **Poinsettia Care**

RG 320 **Growing and Overwintering Geraniums**

RG 328 **Growing Amaryllis**

## Suitable for Gift Giving

HORT 3027 **Garden Calendar**

PM 212 **Landscape Plants for the Midwest**

PM 713 **Indoor Plants**

PM 1942 **Annuals**

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

*These publications (as well as many others) are available to purchase at county Extension offices or at ISUE online store <https://store.extension.iastate.edu>.*

## Gardening Guide

### November

- Rabbit proof young trees
- Purchase amaryllis bulbs for forcing indoors
- Buy a holiday cactus for a long-lived house plant
- Mulch strawberries with 3-5 inches of straw
- Protect hybrid tea roses with soil and mulch
- Clean garden tools and equipment
- Winterize lawn mower
- Water newly planted evergreens thoroughly before the ground freezes
- Drain all water from garden hoses prior to storage

### December

- Refill bird feeders
- Purchase a Christmas tree from a local tree farm
- Place poinsettias in a bright location away from drafts
- Keep Christmas tree stand full of water
- Request seed catalogs
- Purchase 2020 ISU Garden Calendar
- Browse gardening books at bookstore
- Gently remove heavy snow from evergreen boughs
- Put ferns on pebble trays to increase humidity
- Avoid wetting leaves of African violets

### January

- Mix sand with deicing salts when treating sidewalks and driveways
- Cover new perennials with Christmas tree boughs
- Order flower and vegetable seeds
- Place ferns and orchids on pebble trays to raise humidity
- Rotate houseplants to prevent one-sided growth
- Check stored bulbs; discard any that are rotting
- Wait until spring to fertilize houseplants.

*Items are from 2019 and 2020 ISU Extension Garden Calendars.*

## 10:20 reminder

### Enter your Master Gardener hours online!

To remain a current active Master Gardener once the initial 40 hours of volunteer service are completed; *Master Gardeners are to complete 10 hours of continuing education and 20 hours of volunteer service annually.* Master Gardeners are encouraged to submit their volunteer and continuing education hours for 2019 using the online VRS system BY December 31. **Please consult the Mahaska County listing of 2019 events.** Utilize the **Get Help with VRS** if you have lost your password or have other technical problems.

Master Gardeners are also asked to check their record of previous years and notify Suzette of any errors. If you haven't kept your record current, you may enter past year's data and notify Suzette once it is entered. If you have not used the online system in past years, please submit your hours on paper to Suzette at the Extension office.



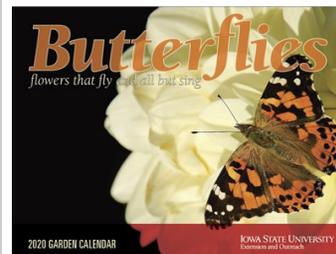
## 2020 Extension Garden Calendar

### Butterflies: flowers that fly and all but sing

Floating lightly on the breeze, butterflies add beauty to any garden. The butterfly takes center stage in the 2020 Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Garden Calendar, showcasing the vibrant colors and majestic beauty that makes them such a welcome part of any backyard or garden.

This 12-month calendar showcases butterflies throughout the year, as they bring their special beauty to each page.

The large calendar grid offers space to create a gardening journal to record the progress of your own garden. Refer to the monthly tips that provide timely cultural information for fruits and vegetables, lawn care recommendations, tree and shrub guidance, and other information. Whether it be flowers, fruits, vegetables, trees, or turfgrass, this annual calendar provides tips on a variety of topics so that you can easily know what task should be completed next in your own garden



**The calendar makes a great gift and a handy garden journal too. It has arrived at our office and costs \$7.**

**“A garden is a grand teacher. It teaches patience and careful watchfulness; it teaches industry and thrift; above all it teaches entire trust.”**

— Gertrude Jekyll

## Mulching Strawberry Plants

It's time to think about protecting strawberry plants from the winter elements. Horticulturists with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach explain how to properly mulch strawberries to provide protection against winter injury. To have additional yard and garden questions answered, contact the ISU Hortline at 515-294-3108 or email [hortline@iastate.edu](mailto:hortline@iastate.edu).

### Why is it necessary to mulch strawberries in fall?

Strawberries should be mulched in fall to prevent winter injury. Low temperatures and repeated freezing and thawing of the soil through the winter months are the main threats to strawberry plants. Temperatures below 20 F may kill flower buds and damage the roots and crowns of unmulched plants. Repeated freezing and thawing of the soil can heave plants out of the ground, severely damaging or destroying the plants.

### When should I mulch my strawberries?

Allow the strawberry plants to harden or acclimate to cool fall temperatures before mulching the bed. Applying a mulch before the strawberry plants have hardened-off properly may make plants more susceptible to winter injury. In northern Iowa, strawberry plantings are normally mulched in early November. Gardeners in central and southern Iowa should mulch their strawberries in mid-November and late November, respectively.

### What materials are suitable for mulching strawberries?

Excellent mulching materials include clean, weed-free oat, wheat or soybean straw. Chopped cornstalks are another possibility. Apply approximately 3 to 5 inches of material. After settling, the mulch layer should be 2 to 4 inches thick.

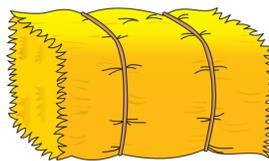
### Are leaves a suitable mulch for strawberries?

Leaves are not a good winter mulch for strawberries. Leaves can mat together in layers, trapping air and creating space for ice to form. The leaf, air and ice layers do not provide adequate protection. A leaf mulch may damage plants due to excess moisture trapped under the material.

### How do I prevent straw from blowing off my strawberry bed in winter?

In windy, exposed areas, straw mulches can be kept in place by placing wire or plastic fencing over the area. The fencing can be held in place with bricks or other heavy objects.

*This article was prepared by Richard Jauron, Iowa State University Extension Horticulturist. It originally appeared as a Yard and Garden column November 25, 2012.*



**“What good is the warmth of summer,  
without the cold of winter to give it sweetness.”**  
-John Steinbeck

## Manure as Fertilizer

Animal manure applied as a fertilizer is a good source of nutrients and organic matter; but follow safe practices as it can carry bacteria like E. coli and salmonella.

- Use manure from non-carnivores (includes cattle, chickens, and horses)
- Incorporate the manure into the soil.
- Manure should be properly composted before application. If you use raw manure in the garden, wait 120 days before harvesting crops.

## Garden Markers for sale!

Mahaska County Master Gardeners have EON metal Garden Markers for sale at the Extension Office. They make great gifts!

- \$.75 each
- \$7.50/bundle of 10
- \$15.00/bundle of 20

## Other Extension Events

ISU Extension and Outreach schedules events in other program areas (which may be of interest to gardeners). They will be publicized in local media, facebook pages as well as our website.

## Weather Announcements

If the weather is inclement or forecast to become inclement during the event, the event will likely be postponed/canceled. To confirm if an event is being held, please call our office (during office hours), check our Facebook pages (Iowa State University Extension and Outreach-Mahaska County and/or Mahaska County Master Gardeners) or listen to KBOE 104.9 radio weather announcements.

## Additional Events

Mahaska County Master Gardeners may schedule additional events this winter. They will be publicized at events, in local media, email, facebook pages and our website.

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 calling 641-673-5841 or emailing [striegel@iastate.edu](mailto:striegel@iastate.edu).

# IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Extension and Outreach

## Upcoming Events

~Mahaska County Extension Office Staff~

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

~Office Hours~

Monday-Friday  
8:00 am-1 pm, 1:30 -4:30 pm

<i>Nov 1 First Friday Coffee break</i>	<u>9:30 am</u>
<i>All Bugs...Spiders (webinar)</i>	<u>1 pm</u>
<i>Nov 12 Master Gardener Meeting</i>	<u>6 pm</u>
<i>Barnswallow Flowers and</i>	
<i>Produce Speaker</i>	<u>6:30 pm</u>
<i>Nov 19 Herbal Teatime and Workshop</i>	<u>6:30 pm</u>
<i>Nov 21 Holiday Plant Care</i>	<u>6:30 pm</u>
<i>Nov 28 &amp; 29 Office Closed for Thanksgiving</i>	
<i>Dec 2 Wreath Workshop</i>	<u>6 pm</u>
<i>Dec 6 First Friday Coffee break</i>	<u>9:30 am</u>
<i>Dec 24 &amp; 25 Office Closed for Christmas</i>	
<i>Jan 1 Office Closed for New Years</i>	
<i>Jan 3 First Friday Coffee break</i>	<u>9:30 am</u>
<i>Jan 14 Mahaska County</i>	
<i>Master Gardener's Celebration</i>	<u>6 pm</u>
<i>Jan 23 Gardener's Show and Tell</i>	<u>6:30 pm</u>

# IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Extension and Outreach

## Mahaska County Extension

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

