Vertical Gardening Workshop—Think you don’t have enough space to grow a lot of plants? Tired of looking at that boring garage wall? Sore back from bending over to weed your flower beds? Need a little shade or more privacy from your neighbors? Then grow up! Vertical gardening is more than growing wisteria on an elaborate arbor or hanging a basket of petunias from the eaves—it adds a whole new dimension to your landscape. Material will be available to purchase or bring your own. Pre-registration required. Instructed by Marion County Master Gardeners.

Rain Barrel Workshop Offered Again This Spring!

Why rain barrels in a drought? With even a small amount of rain your rain barrel will fill to capacity! You can decrease your water bills, storm water runoff and erosion. You will also enjoy using naturally soft water from rain barrels.

You’ll learn the why’s and how’s at this informative workshop conducted by Holly and Joel Gettys of Rain Barrels Iowa. The couple is passionate about sustainability and you’ll appreciate their journey as well as learn about their rain barrels, soaker hoses, and other ways of harnessing Mother Nature’s water. Everything they talk about will be available for sale.

The workshop will be held at the Marion County Extension Office on Saturday, April 27th from 10:30-noon.

Spring’s Coming...Really!!

I snapped these pictures of the woodland Hepatica on April 21, 2011. Last year the hepaticas were blooming in early April! What’s your prediction for this year? Remember...last hard freeze in central Iowa is usually around May 10th; plant accordingly!

Why Not?

Vertical Gardening Workshop—Think you don’t have enough space to grow a lot of plants? Tired of looking at that boring garage wall? Sore back from bending over to weed your flower beds? Need a little shade or more privacy from your neighbors? Then grow up! Vertical gardening is more than growing wisteria on an elaborate arbor or hanging a basket of petunias from the eaves—it adds a whole new dimension to your landscape. Material will be available to purchase or bring your own. Pre-registration required. Instructed by Marion County Master Gardeners.
**Don’t Play With Fire!**

A good prairie (or ditch) fire is one of the special rites of spring on the prairie. Here are a few tips to keep it safe (and fun!).

√ **Be Patient** — Wait for the right conditions. The warmer the temperature, the hotter the fire. Burn later in the day or in the evening. The moister the air, the slower a fire will spread. Burning in the evening when the humidity is lower can sometimes be the most important factor in determining how fast a fire spreads. Watch the wind. Burning when winds exceed 5 miles per hour is generally not recommended, especially if flammable structures are nearby.

√ **Burn Against the Wind** — Never start a prairie burn so that the fire is moving in the same direction as the wind! This will almost guarantee an uncontrolled burn.

√ **Burn Downhill** — When a fire burns uphill it pre-heats the fuel ahead of it, making it burn faster and hotter. It can even create its own wind, further increasing the rate of spread.

√ **Call Before & After** — Call the Marion County Sheriff’s office (828-2220) to alert officials that you’ll be burning. When the neighbors start calling them to put out your “controlled” burn, they’ll be grateful. Then call them when you’ve successfully completed your burn. That’s when you can relax and know you played with fire and won!

---

**What’s Goin’ On?**

**April 6**—Knoxville Federated Garden Club’s *Garden Gala*. Once again this popular event is sold out!

**April 13**—Iowa Arboretum’s *Spring Fever Symposium*, 10 AM—3 PM. Debra Lee Baldwin, author of the bestselling books Designing with Succulents (2007) and Succulent Container Gardens (2010), will be speaking. The focus of the morning talk will be on using succulents in containers, wall gardens, wreaths, bouquets, topiaries and more. After lunch and a book signing, Debra will demonstrate some extraordinary planting combinations with a lucky participant taking home one of her fabulous creations. The Arboretum will be offering a selection of hardy and non-hardy succulents, clearly identified, at the accompanying plant sale. $55 for members, $65 for non-members.

**April 22**—Arbor Day. Plant a tree.

**May 11**—Marion County Extension’s Spring Workshop—*Vertical Gardening*; Marion County Extension Office, 210 N. Iowa Street, Knoxville, IA 50138. 10:30 AM—Noon, Marion County Extension Office, 210 N. Iowa St. Material will be available to purchase or bring your own. Instructed by Marion County Master Gardeners. Pre-registration required at kackley@iastate.edu or 641-842-2014.

**May 11**—Mahaska County’s *Master Gardener Plant Sale*, Saturday, May 11, 8-11 AM, Mahaska County Extension Office, 212 North I St., Oskaloosa. Features annuals (flowers and veggies), perennial divisions, garden produce, EON garden markers and 2nd-time-around gardening items. Proceeds used to support future activities and speaker fees.

---

“The Green Scene” is a tip sheet developed by the Marion County Extension Office to inform people of horticulture events, problems, and interesting ideas. Let us know if you want to be added to our mailing list. Some issues are also available at [www.extension.iastate.edu/marion/](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/marion/). This material has been prepared Karen Ackley, Agriculture Program Assistant and Master Gardener Coordinator. If you have questions, please contact the office at (641) 842-2014.

Sincerely, Dale R. Miller, County Extension Program Director