Successful Art of Gardening 2018
(see page 12 for more details)

WORTHWHILE DIRT

April 2018
Muscatine County
Upcoming General Meeting and Event Highlights
Coordinated by Jane Hodge
Master Gardener

Future Events include:
April 9, 5:30-7:30pm — Floral Training by Karen Britcher at ISU Extension Office

April 10, 6:30 pm — General Meeting at ISU Extension - Guest speaker via Zoom: Donald Lewis, PhD, professor of entomology discussing Japanese beetle, tomato hornworms, squash bugs, squash vine borer & spotted wing drosophila.

April 14, 9-10:30am — Spring Operation Releaf at Weed Park Aquatic Center

Greenhouse Tours — presentations at 6pm Come early and shop 10% discount with name tag
* April 19—Hilltop at 11606 23rd St., Illinois City
* April 24—Taylor’s Market, 2637 Stewart Road

April 27, 8:30-noon — L&M High School Day of Caring at Zoo Garden

May 12, 8am - noon — Joint Plant Sale at Discovery Park in Muscatine

June 9, all day — Hornbacker Gardens Tour and Educational Presentations in Princeton, IL

June 12, 6:30 pm — General Meeting/Garden Tour at Pruitt’s at 606 Broadway, Nichols - Including Educational Presentation by Kathy Haltmeyer

July 10, 6pm til dark — Fern Walk at Wildcat Den State Park

July 15, 2pm — Plum Grove garden tour in Iowa City

July 17, Bucket Brigade @ WL Fair Grounds

July ???, Fruit and Vegetable Meeting @ Muscatine Island ISU Research Farm

Oct 9, 6:30 pm — General Meeting at ISU Extension - Tami Schmidt will present the prairie rejuvenation she has done at her Milan home.

More Regional Events:
April 7, 10am-12n — Fruit Tree Grafting Seminar — Iowa City — Fee $35 (includes rootstock to take home)

April 12-13, 8:30am-3:45pm — Gardening School — Iowa Arboretum, Madrid — Fee $60 (includes FGCI testing)

April 22, 2-4pm — Let’s Get Growing Workshop — Clinton County Fairgrounds

June 13-16, 8am-4pm — Upper Midwest Regional Master Garden Conference — Chaska, MN

See ISU Website for additional information and many more opportunities: http://www.extension.iastate.edu/mastergardener/events

SEE NEXT PAGE FOR MORE DETAILS OF:
• GENERAL MEETING
• GREENHOUSE TOURS
• OUT OF TOWN TOURS

To Schedule Home Garden Tours: Call Jane 563.272.1638

(only one home garden tour is scheduled so far — at Pruitt’s in conjunction with June 12 General Meeting)
HERE ARE DETAILS OF EVENTS (FROM PREVIOUS PAGE):

DETAILS OF GENERAL MEETING PRESENTATIONS

April 10, Tuesday - Dr. Donald Lewis - His presentation will cover Japanese beetle, tomato hornworms, squash bugs, squash vine borer and spotted wing drosophila. This will be a ZOOM live talk with Dr. Lewis and our MG group. He will answer question during or after the presentation.

June 12, Tuesday - Our own Master Gardener, Kathy Haltmeyer, is our presenter. She will give us an overview of the classes she has take at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin, Texas. Besides this presentation, our hosts, Emma and Lynn Pruitt, will lead us on tours of their gardens at 606 Broadway, Nichols, Iowa.

October 9, Tuesday - Tami Schmidt will present the prairie restoration she has done at her Milan home.

DETAILS OF GREENHOUSE TOURS

We have two gracious hostesses this year who are offering a 10% discount to us! Their programs will start at 6:00pm but we ask you to do your shopping before the program. Please wear your MG badge.

April 19, Thursday (Note change of date) - This is a Thursday. Hilltop Greenhouse, 11606 233rd Street, Illinois City

April 24, Tuesday - Taylor’s will show our group their 2018 new plants. Taylor’s is located at 2637 Stewart Road, Muscatine.

DETAILS OF TOURS

June 9, Saturday - Hornbakers Gardens - this family owned and operated business has large collections of hostas, daylillies, trees and shrubs, grasses, aquatics, annuals and other perennials drawing plant enthusiasts from the Midwest and across the country. On this special Saturday trip Hornbakers has their annual Open House featuring special sales and workshops. Our group is scheduled for a workshop on pruning at 11:00am. Our plans are to gather at ISU Extension at 9:00am and carpool for about a 1 1/2hour trip to the gardens. Hornbakers Gardens, 22937 1140 North Avenue, Princeton, Illinois. Their website (Hornbakergardens.com) will wet your taste flower appetite for all that awaits.

July 15, Sunday - Plum Grove Heritage Garden - Step back into time for a tour of the historic vegetable and flower gardens around the home once inhabited by our first governor, Robert Lucas. These gardens are part of the Smithsonian’s Archives of American Gardens. Host Master Gardeners will be on hand for the tour and to answer questions. Our plans are to meet at ISU Extension at 1:00 and leave promptly to arrive for our scheduled tour at 2:00. Admission is free. (Note of interest Robert Lucas also live in Bloomington renamed to Muscatine.) 1030 Carroll Street, Iowa City
Alliant Energy's Spring Operation Releaf

Alliant Energy's spring Operation Releaf events are scheduled to run from April to May.

Operation Releaf is an energy-efficiency program that, in partnership with the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, offers residential customers in Iowa the opportunity to **purchase up to two landscaping trees for only $25 each** to help improve their home's energy efficiency.

Order forms and more information on the program are available at www.alliantenergy.com/releaf<http://www.alliantenergy.com/releaf>.

Location: Muscatine County including City of Muscatine

City of Muscatine, Parks and Recreation Department
Location: Aquatic Center in Weed Park, 1 Park Drive, Muscatine

**Date:** Saturday, April 14, 9 - 10:30 a.m.
**Tree Planting and Care Workshop:** 9:30 a.m.

**Application deadline:** 4/6/2018

One random workshop participant will receive free pruning tools

Download Order Form<https://www.alliantenergy.com/-/media/Files/CommunityandStewardship/Outreach/OperationReleafSpring2018Muscatine.pdf?la=en>

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**LAST CALL !**

Choose from these species:

- Swamp White Oak
- Northern Red Oak
- River Birch
- Silver Linden
- Sassafras
- Loebner Magnolia ‘Leonard Messel’
- Serviceberry
- Katsuratree
- American Larch
- White Spruce

Trees 3-5’ tall
Containers 5-7 gal.

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The L&M High School Day of Caring

The Zoo Garden will participate in a Day of Caring on Friday, April 27, 2018. Students from L & M School will help us at the Zoo Garden from 8:30 to Noon.

We will also count on Master Gardeners help that morning to get the garden ready for the start of the season.
April 1 and plants are popping - but, it’s too darn cold to do much about the yard! I’m not a patient person (that’s probably not news to you) and it’s starting to annoy me!

Six more weeks until our plant sale and I hope when we dig plants we can tell what they are! Next week out looks like more of the same. This means we’re really going to have to hustle when we do start to dig. Line up those pots now, put your hat and gloves on and mark some plants you need to divide; get your potting soil ready; get your plant markers ready; open up your calendar so you don’t have conflicts, once the weather turns; and most of all – get excited!

This is an excellent way to get new plants, share what you have, shop at the daylily and garden club tables; (and I hear 4-H might have a bake sale); My order is in for a perfect sunny day, so that’s taken care of – all we need is your participation in both plant offerings and help working the sale.

May 12, 8 am until noon. Discovery Center. Flyers are out. Pick some up and pass out to businesses you frequent – you know – bars and churches – just kidding! You probably aren’t in the right frame of mind – now – but just wait – when you get up and the sun’s shining and the weather person says 60+ degrees – you won’t be able to make it out the door fast enough!

Susan

O’boy, like “what else, Susan, would you like us to do? Well, now that you asked, please sign up and help on this summer’s Saturdays at the Farmers’ Market! The Market starts in May (next month) but I usually don’t start us until June when the weather is a little more stable – who knows this year!

We will run June 2 through September 22, excluding any Saturdays that fall with holidays. We don’t generally do the Tuesday Market, just Saturday. It’s great exposure for our club and is an opportunity for many who are “thinking about Master Gardeners” to sign up for our fall classes! We’re all about “education” and can present that in many different ways.

You can prepare a recipe promoting the Farmers’ Market produce that is in season at the time; handout literature (Extension office has all kinds, as does the ISU website); and can come up with some really creative ways to present information that brings back attendees week after week to the Master Gardener booth!

These are volunteer hours that are fun and informative! When you get your calendar out to make sure you have the Plant Sale written down – mark the Saturdays you’d like to work the Farmers’ Market! This isn’t set in gold – people switch if something comes up.

We’ll have a meeting a little later in May for ideas, recipes, questions new members may have, etc. Really consider doing this, these are easy hours for busy people! You don’t have to work alone, the more the merrier! My e-mail is cradicks45@yahoo.com. Thanks for your time.

Susan
Plant Sale!

Saturday, May 12th, 2018

8 am to Noon

Muscatine Environmental Learning Center, Discovery Park Pavilion

- Established perennials from Muscatine County Master Gardeners
- Registered Iris and Daylilies from Cedar Valley Iris and Daylily Society
- Beautiful plants from the Muscatine Garden Club

For more information contact:
Heather Harroun – Muscatine County Master Gardeners - jhsharroun@outlook.com
Deborah Bentley – Muscatine Garden Club – (641) 420-3696
Keith Riewerts – Cedar Valley Iris & Daylily Society – (563) 285-8941
Hello Master Gardeners,

Is Mother Nature is playing an April Fools joke on us? Where is our spring weather? I am sure it is on its way – my son starts playing baseball this week so hopefully it will warm up fast. As always Lynn has the newsletter full of great articles and information about important events. I wanted to take this opportunity to inform everyone that the board, on the recommendation of Kathy Haltmeyer and myself, has approved that we take 2018 off from offering the Master Gardener training. Iowa Master Gardeners are introducing a new format for the training called Flipped Classroom. In this format participants will be sent electronic files (videos, articles) to review prior to the meetings then the meeting will consist of more hands-on activities instead of lectures. Kathy and the board are going to visit nearby counties using this format so we can take the time to plan properly for this transition. I believe it is an exciting opportunity to update our training.

For those looking for Education Hours we do have another exciting opportunity in the works for this fall. I was approached by Hannah Howard with The Nature Conservancy about partnering to host a Master Conservationist program. Louisa County has joined in and the planning has started. So far I can share that the course will be Thursday evenings, August 30 through October 11, 6 – 9 pm. The program will be utilizing the Flipped Classroom format, so before each session (except for the first) participants will have online material to review. Each class will be held at a different location around Muscatine and Louisa Counties that correlates with the evenings topic. Topics will include Geology, Prairie, Aquatic, Forest, Watershed and Communicating Conservation. ISU has just revamped this program and we are excited to offer it in Muscatine and Louisa County. There is no service component to the Master Conservationist program. Our goal is to have registration information out by June 1 – but I wanted to give you all a sneak peek!

(Continued next page, DIRECTOR)
(Continued from previous page, DIRECTOR)

We have a lot of great programs going on at the Extension Office and with community partners. If you haven’t yet I encourage you to Like our Facebook page: www.Facebook.com/MuscatineExtension. Here are a few things we have going on:

- April is Child Abuse Prevention Month. We partner with many organizations to promote activities over the course of April and one is the state-wide Blue Out Day on Friday, April 6th. We encourage you to wear blue and snap a photo and post it to social media with the hashtag #GreatChildhoodsMuscatine – this will enter you for a chance to win a prize!

- Extension Specialist Barb Dunn Swanson will be hosting an OUCH! That Stereotype Hurts! Training on April 30th. This program, offered 6-7:30 pm at the Extension Office, presents an interactive session to learn useful, easy-to-learn phrases and skills for speaking up effectively against bias and stereotypes. Please call our office if you would like to reserve a spot – 563-263-5701.

Happy Spring!

Krista

Simple Tips for Gardening
Written and Compiled by Rachel Quillin

I used to visit and revisit it a dozen times a day, and stand in deep contemplation over my vegetable progeny with a love that nobody could share or conceive of who had never taken part in the process of creation. It was one of the most bewitching sights in the world to observe a hill of beans thrusting aside the soil, or a row of early peas just peeping forth sufficiently to trace a line of delicate green.

— Nathaniel Hawthorne
Remarks from the Chair

By Ed Moreno, Master Gardener, Chair

I had the honor of attending the Greater Muscatine Chamber of Commerce & Industry (GMCCI) annual meeting at the new Merrill Hotel and Conference Center. What a beautiful facility for our community! The meeting was the first major event and concluded with a special fireworks display on the Mississippi that could be viewed from the 6th floor balcony.

I saw several MMGs there, including our own Krista Regenniter, who is on the Board of Directors and Shelly Maharry, one of our illustrious Board interns.

It brought to mind two things: 1) How lucky and vibrant our community is and the exciting future plans that include the Musser Public Library & HNI Community Center, Westside Trail, Community Dog Park, and Deep Lakes Park Cabins, and 2) The multitude of community businesses and non-profit service contributions that are available with a commitment to support and serve for Muscatine and Muscatine County.

New opportunities for the Muscatine Master Gardeners (MMG) to provide educational and volunteer service may be discovered and presented to us.

More definition and sharing of what we have to offer through our projects, activities and committees will be a focus. The upcoming free demonstration event ‘Designing Your Fair Flowers with Flair’ in the newsletter is a good example of the commitment and dedication of MMGs to share and have fun (April 9, 5:30pm at ISU Extension)! Please get the word out and invite as many as you can. Thank you Barb, Karen & Susan for putting this event on. And thank all MMGs for making service and education so much fun.

Respectfully,

Ed Moreno
Muscatine Master Gardener Association
Board Meeting Minutes - Extension Office
March 13, 2018 6:30 PM

Board Members present: Ed Moreno, Mary Danner, Heather Haroun, Jane Hodges, Ron Jensen, Kathy Haltmeyer, & Candi Whitmer

Board Members absent: Maryrose Peterschmidt

Intern Members absent: Rachel Horner Brackett and Shelly Maharry

Extension Liaison absent: Krista Regennitter

Past Chair present: Lynn Pruitt

Meeting called to order at 6:31 PM

Treasurer’s Report: Beginning balance as of 7/1/17 $7,791.23 with total expenses of $928.02 through 03/05/18 with an ending balance of $6,863.21

Minutes Reviewed from January 9th: Minutes were reviewed and accepted with no corrections

Meeting Schedule for 2018:

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<th>Board Meetings</th>
<th>General Meetings</th>
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<tr>
<td>March 13</td>
<td>April 10– Dr. Donald Lewis “Iowa’s Common Pests” via Zoom</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 8</td>
<td>June 12- Pruitt Garden Tour</td>
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<td>September 11</td>
<td>August 14 (May not meet)</td>
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<td>November 13</td>
<td>October 9- Tammy Schmidt</td>
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<td>December 11- Annual Meeting @ New Hope Church 6 PM</td>
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Schedule for 2018:

March 17th- Art of Gardening @ 8:00 AM at MCC

May 12th- Joint Plant sale @ Discovery Park in the pavilion. Set-up is @ 8:00 AM and runs from 9-noon. Baked goods may be for sale as well.

June 9th- Hornbacker Gardens, Princeton IL. Meet at the Extension Office around 9 or 10. Will finalize the times as it gets closer.

Dr. Lewis’ presentation will be very timely as we prepare for the upcoming 2018 gardening season

Start thinking about extra plants you can donate from your garden to the Plant Sale to support our scholarship fund
(Continued from previous page, BOARD MEETING)

July 10th- Wild Cat Den Fern walk with Bob Bryant @ 6:00. Meeting place TBD
July 15th- Plum Grove, Iowa City @ 2 PM. Meet at the Extension office at 12:30 to carpool
July 17th- Bucket Brigade @ Fair Grounds

Other programs discussed

- Floral Training class with Karen Britcher- Monday April 9th 5:30-7:30 @ ISU Extension Office
- Green House tours
  - April 17th- Hiltop @ 6:00 Shop at 5:30 for a discount
  - April 24th- Taylor’s @ 6:00 Shop at 5:30 for a discount
- Garden Tours
  - June 12th-- Emma Mae and Lynn Pruitt’s house

Open Floor

- Press Releases for events from Publicity Committee.
- Tabling ISU Master Gardener training for 2018. Kathy is training to do a revamped curriculum for 2019. If anyone is interested in taking the course in 2018, they will be referred to another group. The Master Conservationist course will be available as an alternate, but not a replacement.
- Big Sand Mound tour- TBD
- Art of Gardening- Help set up and prepare packets. Friday March 16th.
- Water Feature Program tentative for August
- Still working out details on the Hy-Vee garden
- Scholarships- We’ve got 2 applications so far
- Committees- Those sheets will be laid out at all the meetings for people to look at and sign up to help. Update to have a short description of what that committee does.
- Kids’ Day of Caring- March 28th through United Way
- Winter Webinars

Meeting adjourned at 7:36

Submitted by Candi Whitmer, Secretary/Treasurer
Art of Gardening—Success!

Thanks to everyone! The wonderful committee who planned and worked to present an array of speakers and topics; Carolyn and Janet who took care of the vendors; Emma Mae who arranged all of the lunch table centerpieces; those who came out on Friday to help set up; those who served as hosts (and speakers); the Koellners and Pruitts who served as “Stump the Experts” monitors; and those who got out in some tenuous weather to attend! Linda Meloy tallied all the evaluations and the committee will review and make whatever changes we can to make 2019 even better! There is always room for improvement, including the weather!

Planning for 2019 will begin this fall and we’d love to have you join the committee for brainstorming and participation in this great fundraiser. It was great to work with Cindy Kress at Muscatine Community College in partnering for this event and thank her also. Thanks again to everyone!  

Susan Cradick
Fascinating Hummingbirds
by Emma Mae Pruitt, Master Gardener

Hopefully spring is on the way. I’m really looking forward to warmer days, blooming flowers and the birdsongs. This summer I’m hoping to attract more hummingbirds. We always see some but not to the extent that I have seen in other yards. I read recently that feeders for hummingbirds should be put out in April so I need to get started.

Hummingbirds get their name from the fact that they flap their wings so fast (about 80 times per second) that they make a humming noise. Hummingbirds can fly right, left, up, down, backwards, and even upside down. They are able to hover by flying their wings in a figure-8 pattern. While resting the average hummingbird takes about 150 breaths per minute.

Hummingbirds are only found in the Western Hemisphere, from southeastern Alaska to southern Chile although most live in the tropics. There are more than 300 species of hummingbirds, 12 of which summer in North America and winter in tropic areas. Hummingbirds are solitary migrants so you won’t see them traveling in flocks. One hummingbird species travels 4,000 miles from Mexico to Alaska every spring. Male hummingbirds may start migrating south as early as July. Hummingbirds have large flight muscles. These muscles make up 25 percent of their body weight.

Adult hummingbirds are first to leave in the summer. At the end of September the juvenile birds follow. Most of the juveniles have never flown farther than the backyard next door. Their ability to migrate to their winter home is one of the most amazing mysteries in nature. It is known that the amount of light or really the lack of it signals their departure.

A hummingbird nest is about the size of a half-dollar coin and the eggs look like mini white jelly beans. The female builds the nest, incubates the eggs and raises the young birds all on her own. The nests are made of lichen, moss and bits of spider webs. Spider webs are strong, lightweight and super sticky. It is perfect nest material because it allows for compact nests that will stretch as the baby birds begin to mature.

(continued next page, HUMMINGBIRDS)
Several hummingbird species are in the western half of North America but only one flies the eastern skies regularly, and that is the ruby throat hummingbird. The male ruby throat hummingbird has a green body and a ruby red throat that glistens like jewels in the sunlight. The female has a green back, white under parts and black masks near their eyes.

Ruby throats dart through gardens, woodland edges and parks from one food source to another. Since they constantly burn energy while on the move they may eat up to three times their body weight in a day. To find that much nectar, one bird might visit hundreds of flowers per day. This is why a hummingbird-friendly backyard is so important.

It is easy to attract ruby throats if you supply feeders and flowers. A basic red saucer-style feeder with a bee guard is desirable. The sugar water is far enough below the feeding parts that insects cannot reach it. To make sugar water mix one part white table sugar with four parts water. Bring to a boil to remove impurities and help sugar dissolve. Do not add red food coloring as this may be harmful to the birds. You can also purchase sugar water. Hummingbirds are very protective of their feeders and will try to send other hummingbirds away. To prevent one birds from dominating the feeder put up several feeders located some distance apart and out of sight from each other. Hang feeders in shady areas as this keeps nectar solution from fermenting.

In addition to a feeder, hummingbirds require nectar which is provided by flowers. They especially like red flowers because they have a heightened sensitivity to red. Also the best kind of blooms for hummingbirds are tube-shaped, brightly colored, scentless, and grow where it is easy for hummingbirds to hover and sip. The reason the flowers have no scent is because hummingbirds have a poor sense of smell and rely on sight to find food. Tubular-shaped flowers accommodate hummingbird's long tongues which they use to lick their food at a rate of up to 13 licks per second. Their tongues also have grooves on the side to help them catch insects.

Some flowers that hummingbirds like are bee balm, butterfly bush, butterfly weed, cardinal flower, columbine, phlox, salvia, snapdragon, trumpet vine, catmint, penstemon, agastache and zinnias, and many other annuals.  

Hummingbirds are facing a habitat loss. Also climate change is affecting their migratory patterns which makes it harder for them to find food. There is hope for hummingbirds because they are a backyard favorite and many people are interested in putting out feeders and growing flowers to attract them.

I was happy to learn from writing this article that we already have plants that hummingbirds like. Now if we can just attract them to our feeders.
Winter Travel Log (Florida)
By Maryrose Peterschmidt
Master Gardener

The Sunshine State is a wonderful place to visit and escape the winter weather in Iowa. We flew to the gulf beaches at Clearwater, which are clean and white, with many interesting shore birds such as ibis, oystercatchers, various species of gulls and pelicans. Shell hunting is a favorite pastime of many, bringing their stash of shells north at vacations end.

One of the highlights of our trip was a stop at a manatee sanctuary near Three Sisters Springs north of Clearwater. The manatee is a large marine mammal that nurse their young and are an aquatic relative of the elephant. They are very sensitive to water temperature, requiring at least 68 degrees to thrive.

In Fort Myers we spent a day at the combined winter estate of Thomas Edison and Henry Ford. Edison was concerned that the United States was dependent on foreign sources for rubber used in the manufacture of automobile tires and other uses. In his research laboratory Edison tested over 17,000 plants and discovered that a natural source of rubber could be extracted from the Goldenrod plant. His laboratory, as well as an excellent Ford museum and botanical garden are located on the site. A great vacation destination.

We moved on south, through the everglades, stopping at the Everglade Park visitor center. Many alligators, all sizes, were located in canals and were photographed safely from above. A rare Roseate Spoonbill was seen there as well as other beautiful birds.

We continued south to the Keys, which were battered by recent hurricanes. We took in the sights of Key West, the southernmost location of the continental U.S., visited the Truman Summer White House and a Butterfly Conservatory with resident flamingos, Scarlett and Brett.

Maryrose
Hy-Vee Main Street Garden
(getting ready for 2018 planting)

Here’s the way it looked on March 26

Then the Muscatine Day of Caring occurred on March 28. With the great help from the Muscatine High School English as a Second Language class, the Main Street Garden was transformed. The student workers cleaned out the raised beds from last fall and added a pallet of Hy-Vee top soil.

Next step is to add compost and the raised beds will be ready for planting by the Flickinger Learning School students.
March 21 — Attended Dr. Patrick O’Malley’s ISU research farm fruit tree trimming workshop. Learned to cut off dead wood; prune all shoots growing straight up or down from branches; cut off crossing branches; and give haircut if branches are too long or too low. Patrick says spring is about 2 weeks late this year.

March 23 — Trimmed our apple trees pretty severely but O’Malley says that’s good to stimulate fruit quality!

Once the ground has thawed it is a good time to remove gopher mounds; insert some mole poison and pick up the winter debris. I’m working on it!
Honeysuckles adorn the area near our mailbox. It is known as scarlet trumpet honeysuckle. The honeysuckles are a group of vigorous woody vines and shrubs that can be grown nearly anywhere. As a rule, they produce abundant foliage, flowers and fruit, and are nearly indestructible. Because it is indestructible explains why certain species of honeysuckle can quickly get out of control and become a pest in the landscape. As a child, our fence rows were filled with wild honeysuckle. Honeysuckles belong to the genus Lonicera, which contains about 180 identified species. Most are native to the Orient although native species do exist in Europe, India and North America.

The common name honeysuckle is derived from the sweet nectar which can be sucked from their flowers. The term honeysuckle most often is associated with twining, woody vines. The latter can be good or bad. The bad reputation of honeysuckle has been earned by only a few species, the most notorious of which is Japanese honeysuckle. Youngsters love this plant because the sweet nectar that can be sucked from its flowers; most adults despise it because of its invasive tendencies.

Planted with good intentions, Japanese honeysuckle often becomes a weedy, twining vine that can grow from 15 to 30 feet in length. It was introduced into the eastern United States from the Orient in the early 19th century and has spread into many native areas since that time. Japanese honeysuckle bears semi-evergreen leaves and produces very fragrant flowers that change from white to yellow as they mature. Left uncontrolled when located near shrubs and small trees, the plant vines over them and can choke them out. We trim our honeysuckle annually, or it will cover the mailbox. Birds spread its seeds by eating its berries and starting the plant under trees, along fences or other places birds might frequent.

(Continued next page, HONEYSUCKLES)
Fortunately, not all vining honeysuckles are as vigorous and invasive as Japanese honeysuckle. The **scarlet trumpet honeysuckle** is a better choice for climbing the likes of a fence or trellis. While it may grow up to 20 feet or more in length, it is not nearly as vigorous as Japanese honeysuckle. Additionally, it does not produce abundant seeds that, subsequently, can be spread by birds. Its trumpet-shaped, red flowers are very attractive to hummingbirds, which gives the plant additional summer interest.

The best choice for a vining honeysuckle is **Brown’s honeysuckle**. It is vigorous, yet not aggressive, it is a great choice for arbors and trellises. It, too, is very attractive to hummingbirds. No doubt the most useful honeysuckles in the landscape are the shrub honeysuckles. The latter include species which produce large plants that make attractive screens, hedges, or large specimen plants. One of the most common in this group is **Tatarian honeysuckle**. Native to Siberia, it grows about 10 feet tall and equally wide when left unpruned. It bears red to pink flowers that later fade to white, depending upon cultivar. Its fruits are a red berry that ripens in June or early July and are a favorite food of birds. Although the plant cannot be considered nearly as serious a pest as Japanese honeysuckle, the abundant berries it produces contain seeds which are spread by birds, causing it to become weedy in some areas.

**Winter honeysuckle** is another shrub-type honeysuckle that makes a good hedge or screen. It grows fairly quickly to a height of six to 10 feet and bears fragrant white flowers in very late winter or early spring, making it a pleasant harbinger of spring. Although it lacks other outstanding qualities, it is easy to grow in many types of soils and exposures.

Honeysuckles thrive in full sun, but will tolerate partial sun and light, afternoon shade. As a rule, shrub honeysuckles are intolerant of poorly-drained, wet soils to the point they eventually will weaken and die in such locations. Contrastingly, they are very tolerant of dry soils and can compete well with the roots of trees and other large shrubs. They can, however, overpower smaller plants and shrubs.

(Continued next page, HONEYSUCKLES)
When honeysuckles become overgrown, they can be cut back to ground level with little adverse effects. New shoots quickly will develop and regenerate a new plant.

Shrub honeysuckles that have been cut back often produce so many shoots from the root system that they must be thinned to allow only a few shoots to remain. As they grow and develop, these new shoots can be pruned to control the size and shape the plant. Other honeysuckles of interest include the **Goldflame**, which continues to bloom throughout the summer. Its flowers are pink on the outside and yellow on the inside and are exquisitely fragrant.

For gardeners who want bluish-green color in their landscape, the **Morrow honeysuckle** is a good choice. It bears creamy white flowers followed by red fruit on a dense, somewhat-tangled shrub that may achieve a mature height of six feet.

Conversely, Amur honeysuckle and bella honeysuckle are considered by most states as noxious, invasive plants that should be avoided. Both are erect, shrub honeysuckles native to Asia that tend to invade a wide variety of habitats. The result is the establishment of a monoculture that quickly crowds out native plants. Because of the affinity deer have for honeysuckle as a food source, research has shown a correlation between populations of Amur honeysuckle and tick-related diseases such as Lyme disease.

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**For Immediate Press Release**

**Joint Plant Sale to be hosted on Saturday - May 12, 2018 – 8am till noon**

Muscatine, Iowa - **Muscatine County Master Gardeners, Cedar Valley Iris & Daylily Society and the Muscatine Garden Club** are teaming up on a **Plant Sale**.

**Hosted at the Muscatine Environmental Learning Center, Discovery Park Pavilion.**

The selection will include established perennials, registered iris and daylilies and many beautiful plants. It is time to think spring and beautifying your environment. Do not miss this great opportunity to get the plants you have been looking for and experts to help with your gardening questions!
April Gardening Guide
(Courtesy of Midwest Gardening)

Spring has sprung! Get out there and revel in the pleasure of gardening.

Cleanup and preparation for growing season
• When the bright yellow forsythia bush (pictured at right) is blooming, you can apply a preemergent weed killer, such as Preen, to your flowerbeds and borders. This prevents seeds from germinating and dramatically cuts down on weeding chores later in the season.
• Continue to cut back any perennials still standing. In larger gardens, this can be a big job. (A lightweight electric power hedge trimmer is excellent for this!)
• Avoid significant pruning on any spring- or early-summer-blooming trees or shrubs. You’ll trim off developing flower buds. However, you can cut out damaged or diseased wood now or nearly any time of year.
• Spray fruit trees with dormant oil when the temperature is above 40 degrees. Dormant oil prevents scale insects, spider mites and other pests later in the season. You can also spray dormant oil on roses and other trees and shrubs that have been troubled by pests in the past.
• Delay mulching with wood chips and other weed-suppressing mulches until May and June, when the soil has had a chance to warm up.

Create new beds
• Dig new beds and borders as long as the soil isn’t too wet; you can ruin the texture of the soil by creating muddy clumps and clods. If your soil isn’t very good (too much clay or sand, for instance), create raised beds (right) that you can fill with commercial topsoil. They’re the smartest solution to problem soil.

(continued next page, GUIDE)
Prune and feed roses
• Prune roses once they send out tiny red buds that will turn into stems. Once the stems are about 1/2 inch long, the rose is pretty well out of dormancy and you can tell what wood is alive and what has been killed by winter cold.
• Give roses their first feeding at pruning time. If you like, use a combination granular-type fertilizer/insecticide.

Flower garden tasks
• Plant cool-season annual flowers, such as pansies, vio- las, lobelia, snapdragons and more, about six to eight weeks before your region’s last average frost date. They thrive in cool weather and tolerate frost well. They’re especially good in pots.
• Divide and transplant most summer- and fall-blooming perennials. They’ll have plenty of time to get established by bloom time. Wait to divide spring-bloomers until fall.
• Continue to plant trees, shrubs and roses. You can plant both bare-root and container-grown types now.

Veggie garden tasks
• Plant cool-season annual edibles, such as parsley, cilantro, broccoli, cauliflower, onions, Brussels sprouts, perennial herbs and more.
• Plant radish and spinach seeds as soon as the soil is thawed and you can work it easily.
• Plant or transplant perennial edibles now, including strawberries, raspberries, rhubarb and asparagus.
• Plant potatoes. Good Friday is the traditional planting day in this part of the country.
Lawns: Wake up turf with fertilizer and care
• Consider aerating your lawn (pictured at right). For most lawns, it's helpful to do this every two or three years, depending on foot traffic, soil and grass type.
• Apply a preemergent fertilizer on lawns with cool-season grasses, such as Kentucky bluegrass, when you see the bright yellow forsythia bushes blooming.
• Treat warm-season grasses, such as Bermudagrass and zoysia, with preemergent fertilizer.
• Sow grass seed in patchy spots, keeping the areas well watered with daily waterings, if necessary.

For Immediate Press Release

Fair Flowers With a Flair

Designing Your Own Fair Flowers With Flair – A Free Demonstration on Floral Arranging; to be held on Monday - April 9, 2018 from 5:30-7:30pm

Muscatine, Iowa - Muscatine County Fair Floral Superintendents will show how to design flowers for display.

Hosted at the Muscatine County Extension Office, 1514 Islett Ave.

An interactive question and answer session with tips and ideas on how to arrange, the materials, niches, and table settings for the 2018 Muscatine County Fair.

For reservations or questions, contact: Barb Reesink (563) 264-5620, Karen Britcher (563) 260-3482, or Susan Johnson (563) 299-5058.
2018 Master Gardener Committees — Chair persons
(There are still opportunities for volunteers)

Arboretum — Charles Rickey 563-260-5807
Art of Gardening – Susan Cradick 563-299-9114
Bucket Brigade – Barb Woods 563-506-4506 and Linda Wells 563-263-0292
Community Donation Gardens – Krista Regennitter 563-263-5701
Education — Jane Hodge 563-272-1638
Fair Floral Hall — Bill Koellner 319-627-4545
Farmer’s Market – Susan Cradick 563-299-9114
Helping Master Gardeners Enter Hours — Krista Regennitter 563-263-5701
Historian – Emma Mae Pruitt 319-723-4362
Hy-Vee — Mainstreet Garden — Lynn Pruitt 563-260-0234
Manning Desk at Extension Office – Krista Regennitter 563-263-5701
Member’s Garden Tours — Jane Hodge 563-272-1638
Mulford Community Gardens – Heather Harroun 563-554-0028
Muscatine Branching Out – Kathy Chalupa 563-299-0887
Muscatine Bridge Entry Sign Area — Chair position open
Muscatine County Fair Office Garden – Bill Koellner 319-627-4545
Newsletter — Lynn Pruitt 563-260-0234
Plant Sale — Heather Harroun 563-554-0028
Publicity — Ed Moreno 319-331-0713
Zoo Garden — Maryrose Peterschmidt 563-263-0846

Simple Tips for Gardening
Written and Compiled by Rachel Quillin

THE MOST NOTEWORTHY THING ABOUT GARDENERS IS THAT THEY ARE ALWAYS OPTIMISTIC, ALWAYS ENTERPRISING, AND NEVER SATISFIED. THEY ALWAYS LOOK FORWARD TO DOING SOMETHING BETTER THAN THEY HAVE EVER DONE BEFORE

— Vita Sackville-West

Now is the ideal time to volunteer to serve with one of the committees listed to the left. Just give a call to the listed chair person.

Please note there is one committee without a chair person. Give Laura McGinnis a call if you want to know what’s involved — 309-791-0054
Muscatine County Extension Office
1514 Isett Avenue
Muscatine, IA  52761-4629
563-263-5701 or 800-992-0894
Krista Regennitter
Muscatine County Extension Director
Master Gardener Liaison
. . and justice for all
Iowa State University Extension programs are available to all
without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age,
or disability.
Iowa State University and U.S. Department of Agriculture coop-
erating.

Dr. Patrick O’Malley pruning workshop at ISU
SE Iowa Research Farm—Crawfordsville

2018 Muscatine County
Master Gardener Board
Board Members
Ed Moreno (18)*  Chair
Heather Haroun (18)*  Vice Chair
Candi Whitmer (19)*  Sec/Treas
Kathy Haltmeyer (18)*
Mary Danner (19)
Jane Hodge (19)
Ron Jensen (19)*
Maryrose Peterschmidt (18)*
Lynn Pruitt (Past Chair Advisor)

( )Year term expires as of Dec. 31
* Going off Board Dec 31, 2018/2019
but eligible for re-election

Current Emails and Addresses
As a reminder – keep both the Extension Office
and Lynn Pruitt current on any changes of e-mail
addresses, phone numbers, or mailing ad-
dresses. These need to be current to keep you
— our members — informed.

Editorial Comments:
Please remember, this is YOUR newsletter.
Your articles, photographs and other tidbits are
welcome. Send them by the end of each
month to pruitt.lynn@gmail.com or call
563.260.0234

— Lynn Pruitt, Editor —