Come Join the Celebration!

Muscatine Master Gardeners Annual Meeting and Recognition

* Welcome New Intern
* Recognitions and Awards
* Door Prizzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzzes!
  • Excellent Meal & Fellowship
  • Vision for Muscatine MMG 2019

6:00 pm Tuesday; December 11, 2018
New Hope Church, 3215 Tipton Road, Muscatine
Bring a dish to share, a guest, and your appetite!
Upcoming Meeting & Event Highlights
Coordinated by Jane Hodge, Master Gardener

**MG Annual Meeting — Dec 11, 6:00 pm** at New Hope Church
This event always creates a good time for all who can attend. We encourage Master Gardeners to bring a spouse or other guest. It will be a time for reflecting on the past year’s events and accomplishments. Our Master Gardener Board of Directors has been busy setting new goals and providing opportunities for our members and interns to get involved in meaningful education as well as volunteer activities in and around Muscatine.

**Conservation Planting (and Planning) —** January 10 - 10am – 1pm at Cedar ISU Extension and Outreach, Tipton, IA. Stay up to date on the best methods for tree planting, native prairies, pollinator habitats and more.

**Winter Gardening Fair —** Saturday, February 16 - 9:00am. Save the Date for the Linn County Winter Gardening Fair in Cedar Rapids: [https://www.extension.iastate.edu/linn/](https://www.extension.iastate.edu/linn/)

**Shade Tree Short Course —** Wednesday, February 20 - 8:00am to Thursday, February 21, - 5:00pm at ISU Ames. Join gardeners and arborists from around Iowa for the 60th anniversary Shade Tree Short Course. Find out more here: [https://www.hort.iastate.edu/event/2019-shade-tree-short-course/](https://www.hort.iastate.edu/event/2019-shade-tree-short-course/)

**Dig Deeper: Soil Health & Nutrient Management —** February 21 - 10am – 2pm at Muscatine ISU Extension and Outreach, Muscatine, IA. You’ve heard the basics, now it’s time to dig deeper into soil health and nutrient management. Soil health improvements link to better corn, soybean and cattle production.

**Cover Crop Conference —** March 1 – 9am – 3pm at Durant Community Center, Durant, IA. This day will be part conference part field day (weather permitting). The day will focus on the benefits and challenges of cover crops, especially focused on soil health impacts and fiscal sustainability.

**Art of Gardening — Muscatine —** Plan to attend the March 9 **ART OF GARDENING** at Muscatine Community College. Check with Susan Cradick or other Muscatine Master Gardeners on her AOG planning team to see if you can help — Plan to attend and earn 5 educational hours for 2019!

**Bug University —** April 9 – 1pm – 4pm at Muscatine Environmental Learning Center, Muscatine, IA. Tired of trying to figure out insects with your phone apps? Donald Lewis, professor and extension entomologist with Iowa State University will provide insight into insect identification, beneficial insect diversity, and how to deal with the bad bugs.
Dear Muscatine Master Gardeners:

The Muscatine County Master Gardener 2018 Annual Meeting is fast approaching. It will be at the New Hope Church, 3215 Tipton Rd., on December 11th beginning at 6:30pm.

Please bring family and friends, as it will be a nice evening of fun, friendship, and community service acknowledgement.

Feel free to bring a side dish, casserole or dessert, and a neat little item for the item as a door prize. Chicken from Pizza Ranch, drinks and table service will be provided.

I wish to thank you all for the support to our organization this year! I have continued to grow and develop with the Board and members and am looking forward to powerfully completing our accomplishments at the annual meeting.

Respectfully,

Ed Moreno

Photo: Future Master Gardeners from the West Liberty Youth Dream Catcher program, who helped with the Donation Garden Project this summer
Hello Master Gardeners!

If you have attended a Master Gardener general meeting recently you have heard me talk about our exciting news! The Muscatine County Extension Office will be moving in September 2019. The Extension Council purchased a property and we are currently fundraising to help with the renovations. The building will offer a large meeting room for Master Gardener meetings and events. Watch your mailbox for more information on how you can support this exciting project!

If you need an few more hours of Education here are a few quick resources:

- Pollinators and Growing Herbs: Growing Season Webinar
- Water in the Garden: Growing Season Webinar
- Design from Yard to Trough: Master Gardener Webcast
- Growing Season 2018 Webcast
- Growing Season 2017 Webcasts
- Or Check out Horticulture Friday from IPR

As of November 28, 33 Master Gardeners have reported their hours, for a total of 2,571 volunteer hours. You can enter hours through December 31 so please keep reporting. If you need help please let Mary Danner or me know.

The Growing Together mini grants are due in January to Iowa Master Gardeners. If anyone is interested in joining this project, aimed to increase fruit and vegetable consumption by low resource families, please let me know. (Kristar@iastate.edu, 563-263-5701).

The Muscatine County Master Gardener scholarship application is now available. High School seniors who reside in Muscatine County are eligible to apply. Application deadline is April 1, 2019. Please share this opportunity with any High School seniors in your life!

Don’t forget, you can apply for funding from the Muscatine County Master Gardener Association for your project. Project Grant Applications will be reviewed by the board.

See you on December 11 at New Hope Church for our annual meeting!

Krista

Weed management in the garden & landscape: Understanding herbicides (webinar)
Monday, December 17, 2018 - 1:00pm
https://learn.extension.org/events/3501
Understanding how herbicides work, how to choose the 'right' herbicide, debunking myths, and sharing safe application techniques.
There is a wealth of information on ISU Yard & Garden News

You can find timely gardening information and tips by going to the ISU Horticulture website: https://hortnews.extension.iastate.edu/

Here are a few examples of recent articles that are available for your perusal:

**Keeping Fall Garden Produce** Vegetable gardens may close down for the winter in Iowa, but gardeners can still enjoy the vegetables they have grown. Many vegetables keep for months in cold storage when provided the right conditions.

**Forcing Paperwhite Narcissus** Paperwhite narcissus is a type of narcissus flowering bulb that makes for great home decoration during the holidays. Iowa State University Extension and Outreach horticulturists share information on paperwhite narcissus to help brighten homes this winter.

**Storing Garden Supplies and Tools** Store garden supplies and tools for over-winter before cold winter weather arrives. Start the new year with protected supplies – and perhaps a 2019 garden calendar.

**Germinating Tree Seeds** There are two ways to start tree seeds – the natural way, which often includes sowing the seeds in the fall, or through forced or assisted germination. Horticulturists with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach detail assisted germination of several common Iowa tree seeds.

**2019 Garden Calendar Showcases Garden Beauty through the Seasons** The 2019 Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Garden Calendar showcases the beauty that can be found in gardens in backyards and public spaces. This annual favorite is now available.

**Protect Trees and Shrubs from Rabbits** Winter brings food scarcity, which makes the home landscape a target for rabbits. Rabbits can severely damage trees and shrubs unless homeowners are proactive, which makes protecting them before winter arrives a major priority.

**Yard and Garden: Forcing Tulips to Bloom Indoors** Bulb forcing can bring the bright colors and fragrances of spring indoors during winter. Tulips can be forced indoors from December through March, if steps are taken in the fall to prepare the bulbs.
The 2019 ISU Extension and Outreach Garden Calendar is available in our office. This year the calendar, titled “Gardens Through the Seasons”, uses stunning photography to showcase gardens throughout the year. You can purchase the calendar online (click on the link) or in our office for $7. The calendar has a large grid with space to create a gardening journal to record the progress of your own garden. Monthly tips provide timely cultural information for fruits and vegetables, lawn care recommendations, tree and shrub guidance, and other information.

Pantry Pests (webinar)
https://learn.extension.org/events/3264
December 7, 1:00pm
Kitchen pantries tend to stay full over the holidays with company passing through and more baking! Don’t let pantry pests get the best of you! Join Dr. Dan Suiter, Extension Entomologist, UGA Extension, as he discusses the identification and biology of pantry pests to make control easier.

2019 Art of Gardening
Planning for the March 9, 2019 Art of Gardening is nearly complete. A group of 6-10 Master Gardeners led by Susan Cradick met several times during October and November to put together an interesting and educational program. Committee members have individually made contacts to potential guest speakers and now the program is nearly complete.

Cindy Kress of MCC has been very supportive in this effort. We are hoping to have seven classrooms available and four 1-hour sessions for a total of 28 classes from which our guests can choose. Our tradition of “Stump the Expert” will also continue to allow a total of 5 educational hours for our participants. We also expect several exhibitors offering gardening supplies and ideas for the home garden.

Please mark your calendar for Saturday, March 9, 2019 at Muscatine Community College.

Reducing Tree Damage During Construction (webinar)
https://learn.extension.org/events/3499
December 13, 2018, 1:00pm
As the pace of urban development increases, urban greenspaces and in particular urban trees come in direct conflict with bulldozers and backhoes.

With careful early planning and an understanding of how tree damage occurs, strategies can be implemented for trees to coexist within the built urban environment.
Muscatine Master Gardeners
Board Meeting
November 13, 2018

Board Members Present: Mary Danner, Kathy Haltmeyer, Heather Harroun, Jane Hodge, Ed Moreno, Maryrose Peterschmidt; Intern: Rachel Horner Brackett; Extension Liaison: Krista Regen-nitter

1. Meeting called to order by President Ed Moreno 6:30pm

2. Treasurers report – Krista. Balance as of 11-13-18 $7832.98. No new bills. Only 2 scholarships have been paid out so far. Suggested that scholarship committee look at giving a time limit on using scholarships going forward. Motion to approve report by Mary Danner, second by Kathy Haltmeyer. Motion approved.

3. Reviewed minutes of last meeting 9-11-2018. Motion to approve by Kathy Haltmeyer, second by Maryrose Peterschmidt. Motion approved.


6. New programming – Krista and Kathy. Webinar in December from flipped learning. Possibility to combine with Louisa County for MG train-


8. New board members – nominating committee. Candi Whitmer is stepping down. Need to approve renewing members and replace Candi. Rachel Horner Brackett has volunteered to take Candi’s place.

9. Master Conservationist Program – Krista. Will be offered every other year.


- Master calendar (flesh out at January board meeting). Calendar to cover April-September. Publish in newsletter to assist planning. Provides place to track hours. Introduce concept at December general meeting?

- Add short committee presentations to general meetings.

11. Other items –

- Motion to approve revised scholarship application by Kathy Haltmeyer. Second by Maryrose Peterschmidt. Motion approved.

- Review award system at January board meeting.

- T-shirt order information in January newsletter. Take orders at February general meeting.

- Suggestion to do a Farmers Market set up demo at a general meeting.

Mary Danner made motion to adjourn, second by Jane Hodge. Meeting adjourned at 8pm.

Respectfully submitted, Heather Harroun
Looking for a fun stocking stuffer? Buy a Muscatine Pollinator Project shirt! We have all sizes now from small to 3xl! $20 each

Here’s recent seeding at the Muscatine Pollinator Park! Over 50 species of native forbes and grasses were included!

The two faces of November:
Nov. 2
and
Nov. 26
I was asked to put up a display for the Zoo Garden at the Laurel Building. Was really surprised to find out they wanted me to use the entire front facing window. So what I thought was going to be an easy project to do was more involved. Krista was able to help me by providing some posters to fill in. If you are down, stop and take a look. It turned out to be good marketing for Master Gardeners.

What a beautiful fall it turned out to be. Have enclosed some pictures from the Zoo Garden. Many thanks to all involved for making the gardens look so good.

Maryrose

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**Simple Tips for Gardening**

Written and Compiled by Rachel Quillin

*THE EARTH LAUGHS IN FLOWERS*

— Ralph Waldo Emerson
Our Woodland Legacy Symposium

Connecting Life and Land

Thursday, December 6, 2018  8:30 am — 4:00 pm
Cedar Rapids Country Club    http://www.treesforever.org/symposium
Please register below by Monday, December 3, 2018 at 6 a.m.

Join us at Our Woodland Legacy Symposium as Dr. Dongying Li with Texas A&M University explains the positive impact nature has on many aspects of our lives. Her research includes an examination of children's mental fatigue, moods and academic performances. Both children on the autism spectrum and children in communities impacted by natural disasters have shown to benefit from nature!

As the city forester for the Iowa’s capitol city, David Jahn is actively giving a voice to the trees and woodlands in Des Moines. Jahn is currently initiating an Urban Forest Master Plan, managing the emerald ash borer (EAB) action plan, educating local tree contractors, and working with neighborhoods to raise awareness of the environmental benefits of trees. With a background in landscape management and forestry, David Jahn is working hard to grow his city’s tree canopy. Learn from his lessons and hear about his vision for the future.

Registration Costs:  Member $50
                      Non-Member $75
                      Student/AmeriCorps $25
All living things to include plants require three important factors to survive; oxygen, water and food. Oxygen is plentiful, water in Iowa is available based on rainfall, but food is totally dependent on the soil conditions in which the plants are growing. Growing happy, healthy plants is not always easy! Plants need thirteen different nutrients from the soil in order to fully develop. Six of these nutrients are needed in large quantities.

These six essential nutrients are nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, magnesium, sulfur and calcium. These nutrients are used to help create new cells, which then organize into plant tissue. Without these nutrients, growth and survival would not occur. What do these nutrients do?

1. Nitrogen: Nitrate is the form of nitrogen that plants use and helps foliage grow strong by affecting the plant’s leaf development. Nitrogen is responsible for stimulating strong plant growth and promoting green coloring of foliage and helps with chlorophyll production. Nitrogen is often present in the soil; however, it may be locked in a form that isn’t utilized by the plant. Adding a fertilizer containing nitrogen will directly supply the nutrient to the plant.

2. Phosphorus: Phosphorus is responsible for assisting with the growth of roots and flowers. It also helps plants withstand environmental stress and harsh winters. Just like with nitrogen, phosphorus is often contained in the soil but may be locked in a form the plant can’t use. Adding a fertilizer containing phosphorus can increase the supply of available phosphorus.

3. Potassium: Potassium strengthens plants, contributes to early growth and helps retain water. It also affects the plant’s disease and insect suppression. Potassium strengthens plants, contributes to early growth and helps retain water. Adding a fertilizer containing potassium will offset any imbalances in the soil.

4. Magnesium: Magnesium contributes to the green coloring of plants.

5. Sulfur: Sulfur helps plants resist disease as well as contributing the plant growth and the formation of seeds. They also aid in the production of amino acids, proteins, enzymes and vitamins.

6. Calcium: Calcium aids in the growth and development of cell walls. This is key because well-developed cell walls help the plant resist disease. It is also necessary for metabolism and the uptake of nitrogen by the plant. (Continued next page, SOIL)
Soil pH is a measure of soil acidity. Values of pH range from 1 to 14. A pH of 7 is neutral; anything below a 7 is acidic and anything above is alkaline. A soil pH is an important chemical property because it affects the availability of nutrients to plants and the activity of microorganisms in the soil.

On average, most plants prefer a soil pH between 6.0 and 7.0 and most turf grasses prefer a pH of 5.5 and 6.5. However, pH can differ depending on the plant and turf grass you are growing.

Think of the soil as the food closet for plants, storing the necessary nutrients to feed the plant and ultimately boost plant health over the period of the growing season, and in some cases carrying into the next growing season. Soils do not contain these nutrients naturally; however some may be retained after each growing season. When is a good time to take soil tests in your garden or lawn? We feel that fall is the best time for many reasons, mostly because the labs will more quickly return your results and then you can plan for the addition of nutrients to your lawn or garden.

Once the results are returned and it is determined that you need to raise or lower your pH to the desired values needed for your lawn and garden. Here are some suggestions.

If your soil is acidic, and you need to raise the pH, then add lime. Lime is the most common soil additive for raising pH of your soil to make it less acidic. You will generally see two types: calcitic limestone (which is mostly calcium carbonate), and dolomitic limestone (which also adds magnesium to the soil). Both work equally well at raising soil pH. Liming products come in granular, hydrated, pelletized, or pulverized forms. Most soils in are not acid in eastern Iowa.

If your soil is alkaline, then add organic matter. As organic matter breaks down, it tends to make soil more acidic. Regular use of organic compost and mulches will, over time, bring the soil pH closer to the desired neutral to slightly acidic level.

Every good gardener knows to fertilize their garden with well-balanced applications and plant food and compost when they need it. However, experienced gardeners – and farmers, too – learn the exact nutrients needed at any stage of growth, for health, beauty, and even tastiness. They can pick up on what plants need through various signs and indicators, diagnosing illnesses, pest issues, and nutrient deficiencies.

Appearance, discoloration, and other symptoms each send a message about vegetation health and how it can be balanced by the use of nutrients, which is not unlike managing our own health in some ways.

At the top of our list in terms of convenience, the majority of fertilizers you buy have a set, healthy balance of these nutrients built right in – particularly nitrogen,
phosphorus, and potassium, labeled as an “N-P-K” ratio on packaging, and made up of three numbers. These three minerals make up the most important micronutrients that most species and varieties in your garden need.

When considering feeding, ratio numbers on the packaging may vary, depending on their specific blends: The N-P-K amount of most foods will have three identical numbers – such as 6-6-6, indicating a fertilizer containing 6% each of nitrogen, potassium, and phosphorus for general nutrition. Other common kinds tend to have a higher ratio of nitrogen compared to the rest, such as 20-6-6. This is because plants typically need more nitrogen than other nutrients. Otherwise, you can seek formulas that focus on specific needs, rather than general care. For example, a great formula for good rooting and post-transplanting care would be 6-20-20, having high P and K levels; for good flowering, look for 6-20-6, with higher quantities of phosphorus to support and protect flower development.

With these particularities in mind, you’ll want to make sure you’re using the right fertilizer for your specific needs, We are believers of not over fertilizing, but using a simple garden type fertilizer such as 13-13-13. Therefore, when heavy rains occur, the excess nitrogen and phosphorous does not runoff into the streams and produce large algae blooms, and pollute drinking water.

Here are a few things to observe in your garden to help you decide what might be a nutrient deficiency.

- Yellowed leaves (old growth) – Indicates a nitrogen deficiency.
- Yellow-edged leaves (old growth) – Indicates a magnesium deficiency.
- Warped, misshaped new leaves – Reveals a calcium deficiency.
- Purple/reddish leaves – Lack of phosphorus.
- Deformed fruits – Typically due to potassium, though nitrogen excess can contribute.
- Blossom end rot (tomatoes) – Widespread cause is from lack of calcium.
- No flowering/dropped flowers – Can point to lack of phosphorus.
- Light green foliage (rather than dark green) – An “anemic” appearance could be nitrogen deficiency.
- “Burnt” leaf-tip appearance – Points to depletion of phosphorus.
- Abnormally dark green old foliage – Another sign of not enough phosphorus.
- Dark black or scorched leaf appearance – Potassium deficiency.
- Wilted old growth – Potassium deficiency.

Therefore, treating your soil with nutrients will help both the pH and the nutrient deficiencies and produce better looking lawns and gardens.
December Gardening Guide
How to keep your plants happy over the winter!
By Veronica Lorson Fowler

Care for houseplants and bulbs

-- Keep poinsettias well-watered. They dry out easily. Position them in a bright spot away from cold drafts and blasts of heat from a vent or fireplace.

-- Don't fertilize houseplants this month. Let them have a little break, as they would in the outdoors.

-- Check on forced bulbs you have in cold storage. Keep soil lightly moist. And once the bulbs have sent up shoots a half-inch to 1-inch high, take them out and put them in the sunniest, brightest spot possible.

Winter Mulch and Compost

-- Mulch with snow. Perennials love snow. When shoveling, as long as the snow doesn't have salt in it and isn't slushy, don't worry about tossing it onto perennials and small shrubs. Fluffy snow is called white mulch and actually insulates against weather extremes.

-- Collect ashes from your fireplace. Then put them onto your compost heap to increase the potassium content, which is valuable to plants when you reuse your compost in the garden.

-- Recycle your live Christmas tree. Cut off the branches and lay them over plantings as a light winter mulch.

(Continued next page, GUIDE)
Deck the Halls

-- Cut evergreens from your yard and use them for indoor decorating. They make beautiful and aromatic holiday touches. Just remember that you are essentially pruning your evergreens when you take these clippings. So make clean cuts at the fork of a branch or a stem, and use your cuts to enhance the overall shape of the evergreen.

Landscape Care

-- Evaluate your landscape for winter interest. Note good places to plant native grasses, evergreens or shrubs with interesting bark. Then you'll be ready with a plan when you're itching to plant in the spring.

-- Keep walks and plants safe. Instead of sodium chloride rock salt for your icy walks and drives, use calcium chloride, sand, or even kitty litter. It's less harmful to concrete and plants.

Simple Tips for Gardening

Written and Compiled by Rachel Quillin

LAYING OUT GROUNDS MAY BE CONSIDERED A LIBERAL ART, IN SOME SORT LIKE POETRY AND PAINTING.

— William Wordsworth
2018 Master Gardener Committees — Chair persons

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

It’s never too late to volunteer to serve with one of the committees listed to the left. Just give a call to the listed chair person.

Christmas greetings

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From our home to yours
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 addresses. These need to be current to keep you — our members — informed.

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)*
Rachel Horner Brackett (Intern)

Lynn Pruitt (Past Chair Advisor)

There’s still time to enter your 2018 volunteer and education hours in the ISU database.

If you need help
Mary Danner is available to help
She has shared her cell phone # 563-299-6700
Here’s a good website for extra education hours:
https://www.growertalks.com/Webinars/

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 —