Muscatine Master Gardeners
Annual Meeting and Recognition

Master Gardeners at Annual Meeting
(see pages 8-10 for more photos)

2019
MUSCATINE MASTER GARDENER
BOARD MEMBERS
Newly Elected: Rachel Horner Brackett
Re-Elected: Kathy Haltmeyer, Heather Haroun, Ed Moreno, Maryrose Peterschmidt
Retained: Mary Danner, Jane Hodge, Ron Jensen
Upcoming Meeting & Event Highlights
Coordinated by Jane Hodge, Master Gardener

As you look at your MG commitments for 2019, would you please consider joining the Education Committee? Our horticultural educational goals are: to provide quality speakers for general meetings, trips to area gardens, tours of area greenhouses and times to peruse home gardens. Thank you, Jane Hodge

Muscatine Master Gardener Board Meeting — January 8, 6:30pm, Extension Office

Conservation Planting (and Planning) — January 10, 10am – 1pm at Cedar ISU Extension and Outreach, Tipton, IA. Learn best methods for tree planting, native prairies, pollinator habitats and more.

Muscatine Master Gardener General Meeting — February 12, 6:30pm, Extension Office

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/

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

Dig Deeper: Soil Health & Nutrient Management — February 21 - 10am – 2pm at Muscatine Extension Office. Beyond the basics; 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.

International Master Gardener Conference — June 17-21 — Valley Forge, PA
Happy New Year Master Gardeners!

I hope you all enjoyed rolling in 2019. Thank you for all of your contributions to Muscatine County Master Gardeners in 2018! We have so many wonderful projects to be proud of. From the Muscatine Arboretum, the Zoo Garden at Weed Park, donation gardens in Muscatine and West Liberty, projects at the Muscatine County Fairgrounds, Art of Gardening, to our presence at the Muscatine Farmers Market – and that is just naming a few! Our goal in 2019 is to spotlight these projects more at our general meetings so our membership has a chance to learn more about the great work we are doing right here in Muscatine County.

We will be submitting the 2019 Growing Together grant for donation gardening on January 11. So far Terri Hanson, Lynn and Emma Mae Pruitt and Bonnie Reeb are going to applying for funds for the gardens at Zion Lutheran Church and Muscatine Church of Christ. If anyone is interested in helping at either of these gardens or starting a new one please let me know as soon as possible. We will also continue our partnership with the Muscatine Island Research Farm to harvest and deliver produce from their home demo garden to local food pantries.

At the annual meeting I had an opportunity to talk about our exciting new adventure! The Muscatine County Extension Office will be moving in September 2019. We purchased a building at 1601 Plaza Place (near the Muscatine Mall). We are currently fundraising for this project – and you all should have received a letter in the mail. A question did arise about our status to accept charitable donations. We are not a 501 (c)(3) non-profit, we are a government subunit. Per IRS code government subunits are allowed to accept charitable donations for projects that benefit the public, as this project would. If you have any questions about our status, the project, or ways you can support please don’t hesitate to reach out to me. I thank you all for your consideration of support and the support we have already received!!

I look forward to seeing you all at the February 12 general meeting and at Art of Gardening on March 9!

Krista

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.
Dear Muscatine Master Gardeners:

I hope your holidays were filled with fun and joy with your family and friends!

2019 is right around the corner and it is time for the Muscatine County Master Gardener Board to work on planning the upcoming year for our organization, beginning with our first meeting on January 8th. The Board will align on specific officer assignments and discuss activities and events for the coming year.

I want to thank and acknowledge the members who responded to the survey we shared in 2018. The thoughts and ideas were very insightful and will be helpful as we look to the coming year. I have included on pages 5-8 a relatively complete summary of the responses for your information.

Photo: 40th Wedding Anniversary

Cruise with Carol

Respectfully, Ed Moreno

2019 Art of Gardening

Planning for the March 9, 2019 Art of Gardening is complete. Susan Cradick and her team have put together a cadre of talented speakers to present an interesting and educational Art of Gardening program. Committee members along with Cindy Kress of MCC will continue to make the finishing touches. Expect to receive a copy of the program brochure early in the new year.

Topics to be presented range from A to Z (almost); from “Annuals and Perennials for 2019” to “Xericaping”. More exciting details will be presented in next month’s newsletter but don’t wait to sign up as soon as the brochure arrives in your mailbox!

Mark your calendar now for Saturday, March 9, 2019 at Muscatine Community College. Collect 5 educational hours and also gain valuable insight from our exhibitors who offer gardening supplies and ideas for the home garden.
Muscatine Master Gardeners 2018 (MMG) Membership Survey Results

1. **What is the most important reason for your participation in MMG?**
   
   #1 – Personal Development
   #1 – Engage with friends/meet new people
   #3 – Chance to make a difference through community projects

2. **In regards to MMG meetings what things should we start to do?**

   - Involve younger people chairperson of large events; activities should have an assistant who will move up to the chair position; ways to interact; get to know the newer folks
   
   - I don’t know. Once the Master Gardener organization decided to institute requirements such as a background check, increased number of volunteer hours, and the on-line recording of hours, I lost interest. The educational content of the meetings is often not enough to lure me out of the house, but I do enjoy the tours to nurseries and gardens.
   
   - After people are seated, have them move 3 chairs to the right. Limit speakers to 20 minutes. Should be over by 8pm.
   
   - Have more ways to get hours for people that are not retired and have full time jobs
   
   - Discuss topics that are important at that meeting in gardening where members need answers for problems
   
   - Recognize our members for contributions and achievements involve new and younger members in the meeting preparation and/or presentations
   
   - Make better effort to invite non-mg’s for purpose of recruiting encourage long term MMG’s to sit with interns
   
   - Maybe have a 'suggestion box' Have mixer or activity to get to know others better. More mentor opportunities or reach out to MGs that have dropped off or seldom come
   
   - Nothing, my interests and needs are taken care of!
   
   - Highlight our projects/events and evaluate them against the MMG stated purpose. Discuss ways to meet the purpose. Perhaps one or two each meeting. Begin or re-introduce some sort of networking activity to connect us with one another. Encourage members to bring a friend.
   
   - Really not much. Meetings are well organized. Love the speakers. Like the idea of bring a snack. However, I noticed that not that many people are eating. Don't know why because the snacks are mostly homemade and really yummy.
   
   - Our local group does a wonderful job. My personal involvement is restricted by a few physical limitations, but there is a very involved group here with some good leadership.

(Continued next page, SURVEY)
(Con'd from previous page, SURVEY)

- Short member presentations - members have 10 minutes to present the projects they are working on in the community. This will have the dual function of educating everyone about what is happening and/or to recruit new volunteers. Lots of the things people are doing are totally unknown to others in the group!

- 1) Invite the public and prospective new members to General Meetings and events 2) Create a 'welcoming' environment at meetings to intermingle newer and older members 3) Ask for an RSVP to members invited

3. **In regards to MMG meetings what things should we stop doing?**

   - Not one thing.
   - Asking people to sign up to volunteer and then never call or have things for them to do.
   - Some of the speakers are a bit boring, they need to catch our attention, or we lose the crowd. No other ideas.
   - Don't get rid of the snacks, but move that portion to the end
   - 1) Asking members to volunteer for projects that are not well defined 2) Sitting in subgroups 3) Can't think of anything else

4. **In regards to MMG meetings what things should continue to do?**

   - Educ. hours at each meeting
   - Bring a snack for meetings; Speakers; Plant Sale; Share about our donation gardens
   - Everything. I love coming to meetings.
   - I like the potlucks. Offer more education.
   - I like the current format.
   - Meet regularly; have topical speakers plan events
   - Have good technical programs with broad interest
   - Muscatine does a good job in presenting interesting and relevant programs.
   - Maintain a start/finish time bring in interesting speakers
   - Continue the educational portion! Wear our name tags!! (for those who are new or visiting and those who can't remember!!)
   - 1) Have food 2) Offer the opportunity for as many people as possible to share their MMG activities 3) Have good and interesting program

5. **What do you like most about MMG?**

   - Good speakers, adding to my knowledge base
   - I enjoy learning new things about gardening.
   - I always learn something new at each meeting. Everyone is really nice and friendly.
   - Education

   *(Continued next page, SURVEY)*
- Learning about growing plants.
- The knowledge I gain at meetings.
- Getting ideas
- Commonality with a group of people, helpfulness and friendliness of the people
- Topics speakers
- Good people
- Learning and sharing ideas. Garden tours of other MG gardens.
- Enjoy Art of Gardening, information given with sessions at meetings, learning new things re flowers and yards
- Learning and meeting new people!
- Ability to give back to the community
- The educational opportunities. Spending time with those who have a shared interest.
- I like to learn in an environment of interesting and engaged people I like the resources available through the ISU Extension I like performing service to my community

6. **Most Important Meeting Structure Items**

#1 – Interesting/Quality program topics
#2 – Starting and ending on time

7. **How would you describe/rate MMG’s communications?**

- MMG does a good job communicating to members
- MMG seeks input/ ideas from members
- I feel welcome in MMG
- I am comfortable with the pace of change in MMG
- MMG works to update processes and rules to meet the needs of its members
- I am proud of MMG

8. **How could we improve the MMG experience?**

- I drive from Wapello. In 2004/2005 Muscatine County didn’t have enough people to take the class so they opened it up to Louisa County. If they hadn’t done this I would have missed out on a wonderful experience all these years. By the way Louisa Co. doesn’t even have meeting any more. They didn’t like the rules & regulations. I have NEVER had a problem with Muscatine chapter’s rules & regulations. Keep up the good work.
- Require less volunteer hours for those still working fulltime
- Solicit and work with younger members.
- Not sure
- Decrease number of volunteer hours to maintain active status.
- Make it more welcoming

*(Continued next page, SURVEY)*
- Perhaps pare down the number of different projects and make the remaining/new ones more impactful. Don't be afraid to discontinue something just because it has been around for a long time. Look at the impact on the community.

- Redefine the 'committees' as most are projects. Define MMG projects with enough detail that volunteers can be included by MMG members or community organizations. Coordinate with other County MMG's. See how they function and the types of programming they have that would be of interest to Muscatine MMG. Expand to something new and exciting, such as a field trip to DM's or the QC's botanical gardens or Chicago's. Emphasize the value of community service and be very flexible in the ability to track and gain the required service hours commitment to be a MMG as flexible and easy as possible, particularly for new members.

9. Additional Comments

- I value the leadership and the time, energy they devote to the group.

- I'm new so it gets better the longer I come and the more I get involved.

- Love being a Master Gardener.

- I do feel, being in MG for 18 years, more is asked of us, when I feel like slowing down. I will continue doing the Bucket Brigade as long as I can, but may never meet required hours again. I enjoy the meetings & hearing the speakers and love the friendship as well as learning more about my passion of flowers.
Annual Meeting Awards

New Members to the 100-Hour Club
Ron Jensen, Terri Hanson, Richard Crooks, Doug Cocklin (not pictured)

New Members to the 250-Hour Club — Kathy Haltmeyer, Linda Meloy (not pictured)

New Members to the 500-Hour Club
Ginny Maine, Lynn Pruitt

Receiving the 10-Year Service Award — Sara Carroll
More Annual Meeting Awards

Recognition Award — Interns Completing 40 Volunteer Hours
Rachel Horner Brackett, Terri Hanson

New Intern for 2019
Gretchen Nollman

Certificates of Appreciation
Shirley Grimm, Lynn Pruitt

New Member to the 2000-Hour Club
David Cooney
A snowy day at the Zoo Garden. It looks so serene and peaceful, but pictures can be deceiving. Maybe we need to take a look behind the scenes to see what makes this garden work. First, early in the year I will meet with city staff to go over preliminary plans for the year. All that we do must be cleared with the city since the gardens are on city property. After that the Zoo Garden Committee meets several times to discuss ideas and firm up plans for the new year. I also spend time researching the internet and catalogs for new plants available. I also meet with United Way staff and go over plans for the spring clean up. Also, the Saturday coffee series takes more time to find new speakers for the program. I also have to work on grants and other sources to find funding to help with the operation of the gardens. Yes, all of this does happen and will continue over the next several months. Most of all, we need to find new workers, perhaps new Master Gardeners, to monitor the gardens to make sure 2019 is a success. A new year, so much to do.

Maryrose Peterschmidt, Chair, Zoo Garden Committee
Pollination is a process that evolves to benefit both flowering plants, crops and trees as well as pollinators. Pollinators visit flowers, crops and trees for many reasons, such as searching for food, mates, shelter and nest-building materials. When pollinators visit flowers, pollen rubs or drops onto their bodies. The pollen is then transferred to another flower, crop or tree or a different part of the same flower, crop or tree as the pollinator moves from one location to the next. This process is a vital in the life cycle and is necessary to start seed and fruit production in flowers, crops and trees. Not only do pollinators provide essential services in nature, they are also necessary for healthy and productive agricultural systems. Some plant species rely on wind or water to transfer pollen from one flower to the next, such as corn; however, the vast majority, almost 90%, of all plant species needs the help of animals for this task.

Pollinators are the different kinds of insects, birds, and animals that help transfer pollen from one plant to another. Many brightly colored flowers evolved that way to help attract pollinators. For example, the hardy fuchsia has bright red and purple petals to attract hummingbirds, and also supplies nectar for the hummingbirds to drink. While the hummingbird is drinking, pollen rubs off onto the hummingbird’s head, and the hummingbird carries it to the next flower. Bees are another famous pollinator. They’re useful to farmers because unlike the picky hummingbirds, bees enjoy feeding on and pollinating many different kinds of flowers.

Human activities have destroyed and fragmented many native pollinator habitats. Many remaining habitat areas are isolated and degraded by invasive plant species, making them less suitable for native pollinators and other wildlife. These changes in habitat can lead to a reduction of native pollinator food sources and sites for mating, nesting, roosting, and migration. To attract native pollinators, an area must have adequate sources of food, shelter, water, and nesting sites. Habitat management activities can be undertaken to ensure that habitat needs are met. Friendly Practices, which consider six different areas of land use management: foraging habitat, reproduction, shelter, invasive/exotic species control, chemical use, and monitoring can be part of the habitat management practices.

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Examples of habitat management would be to include planting appropriate vegetation, providing water, and using pesticides carefully. The easiest way to attract native pollinators is to plant gardens or meadows that contain a diversity of native wildflowers, trees, and shrubs. A variety of wildflowers and native grasses will provide native pollinators with food which include nectar, pollen, and/or larval host plants. Trees and dense shrubbery provide important shelter, nesting, and overwintering areas for pollinators. Due to differing preferences among pollinator species, planted areas should contain varying levels of vegetation and areas of sun, partial shade, and full shade. Plantings should be done in locations that are sheltered from the wind. Plants native to the region should be selected. Native plants are adapted to the local climate, soils, and the native pollinators with which they co-evolved. Native plants should comprise at least 75 percent of a habitat area.

Mowed lawn area should be minimized in favor of patches of native wildflowers, shrubs, and grasses. Lawn areas that do exist should be mowed less frequently to allow the vegetation to provide habitat for pollinators. Perennials should be chosen over annuals. Perennials are generally richer in nectar and, because they bloom year after year, provide a more dependable food source than annuals.

Flower Pollination: is the process through which pollen, a powder that contains plant sperm cells is transferred to the pistil of a flower in order to produce a seed. A flower’s pistil contains the female reproductive parts like the stigma, and ovary. Just like in human and animal reproduction, the special cells in the pollen and in the ovary combine to produce a brand-new plant seed. Plants have many clever ways of transferring their pollen, but in an emergency situation where no pollinators are present, some plants are able to self-pollinate to help preserve their species.

Plants can transfer their pollen in many different ways. Most plants rely on animals, like hummingbirds or bees, to pick up their pollen and transfer it to a different plant. Pollination of this kind, where the assistance of another living organism is involved, is known as biotic pollination. Some plants, though, can spread their pollen with the help of the wind or water. This is called abiotic pollination. Plants that rely on abiotic pollination will often have very large or multiple stigma to increase the chances of catching pollen, whereas plants who rely on biotic pollination do just fine with only one stigma.

Some flowers and crops are capable of self-pollination, which means that they don't need to transfer pollen to another plant at all. The pollen stays on the plant and the plant produces a seed with its exact genetic material. However, self-pollination reduces the strength and genetic diversity of the plant, so most flowers have come up with clever ways to encourage cross-pollination. Cross-pollination happens when the pollen from one plant is

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transferred to the stigma of a different plant. Cross-pollination ensures that the new seed has a larger array of genetic material to work with, and may even create a new plant.

**Tree Pollination:** Tree blossoms pollinated by their own pollen or pollen from another flower on the same tree. These trees can be planted alone and still produce fruit, nuts, seeds or pods. However bees are often necessary to transfer the pollen. Examples of self-pollinated fruit trees are sour cherries, apricots and peaches. Small fruits, including raspberries and blackberries are also primarily self-pollinating.

Tree blossoms pollinated by another tree of the same natural variety or cultivated variety, or another variety of the same species. Many need bees to transfer the pollen. For edible trees that require cross-pollination, it is best to have more than one variety of the same type of fruit tree in your yard, neighborhood or community. Keep in mind that different varieties may flower at different times. Sweet cherries, pears and most apples require the presence of two different compatible varieties for pollination to result in fruit set.

Heritage Park in West Liberty recently decided to convert some of the Park into a pollinator habitat. Recent memorials, from the Don Wilson, Conrad Gregg and Betty Petersen families, have specified that a pollinator area be established in the names of their loved ones. Therefore, West Liberty Heritage Foundation is working with Trees
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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 cooperating.

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* 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. *
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2019 Muscatine County Master Gardener Board
Board Members
Mary Danner (2019)
Kathy Halmeyer (2020)
Rachel Horner Brackett (2020)*
Heather Haroun (2020)
Jane Hodge (2019)
Ron Jensen (2019)*
Ed Moreno (2020)
Maryrose Peterschmidt (2020)
Gretchen Nollman (Intern)

( ) Year term expires as of Dec. 31
* Going off Board Dec 31, 2019/2020 but eligible for re-election

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 —