March 2018
Muscatine County

Art of Gardening — Act Now!

- An opportunity to learn the latest gardening tips
- Interact with other avid gardeners and vendors
- Gain 5 education hours right here at home
- Volunteer to help in setup and speaker intro’s
- A great meal and many door prizes

Where? Muscatine Community College
When? Saturday, March 17, 8am—4pm
How? Contact Cindy Kress @ 563.288.6161

Art of Gardening Learning Opportunities:
Upcoming General Meetings and Events

Coordinated by Jane Hodge
Master Gardener

Future Events include:

March 13, 6:30 pm — MG Board Meeting — Muscatine County Extension Office

March 17, 8am—3:30pm — Art of Gardening at Muscatine Community College. The planning committee has booked several quality speakers with topics that are pertinent to our local gardening environment. See page 9

April 10, 6:30 pm — General Meeting at ISU Extension - Guest speaker will be Donald Lewis, ISU professor in entomology. See pg 7

April 17, Greenhouse tour — presentation at 6:00 - Hilltop at 11606 23rd St., Illinois City. Come early and shop 10% discount with name tag

May 12, 9am — noon — Joint Plant Sale at Discovery Park in Muscatine

June 12, 6:30 pm — General Meeting at ISU Extension - our own Kathy Haltmeyer

Pending-June — Hornbacker Gardens tour and workshop at Princeton, Illinois

July 10, Fern Walk at Wildcat Den State Park

July 15 — Plum Grove garden tour in Iowa City

July 17, Bucket Brigade @ WL Fair Grounds

Date???, 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.

Home garden tours: Call Jane 563.272.1638 to set a date...We’d love to see your gardens.

Remaining Winter Webinars

Muscatine County Extension Office

6-8 pm

- March 5 - Garden Helpers
- March 19 - Food Security Partners

More Regional Events:

March 6, 7pm — Unconventional Fruit and Nut Crops Seminar — Oskaloosa

March 9, 9am-12n — Intro to Plant Propagation Workshop — Reiman Gardens, Ames — $25 Fee

March 13, 6-8pm — Sustainable Garden Resources Seminar — Reiman Gardens, Ames — Fee $20

March 13, 6:30pm — Your Backyard is for the Birds Seminar — Oskaloosa

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)

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

The Winter Webcasts have kicked off! There are two remaining opportunities in March, each webcast offers two hours of education. Each webcast is 6-8 pm at the Extension office.

* Monday, March 5 - Garden Helpers, presented by Aaron Steil, assistant director of Reiman Gardens, and Laura Irish, graduate research assistant in horticulture at Iowa State University. Explore best practices for managing volunteers from Reiman Gardens. Learn about how Master Gardeners are volunteering as citizen scientists contributing to research.

* Monday, March 19 - Food Security Partners, presented by Tillie Good and Laura Liechty, youth and 4-H program specialists with ISU Extension and Outreach, and Carrie Chennault, graduate research assistant in agricultural education and studies at Iowa State. Hear how Master Gardeners are building projects that increase community food security. Also find out how to expand project partnerships with 4-H youth and volunteers.

I am excited to announce that Muscatine County Master Gardeners has been awarded a Growing Together grant for the third year running. These funds will help us continue the work in donation gardening. This year’s grant will help maintain and expand donation gardens at Muscatine Church of Christ, Zion Lutheran Church, West Liberty First Church United and the Old Barn historical site owned by the Muscatine County Conservation Board. Funds will also continue to support the community corn freezing event held in conjunction with Monsanto and United Way of Muscatine, purchase supplies and training for the Muscatine and West Liberty Food Pantries and offer cooking demos in West Liberty.

I look forward to seeing everyone at Art of Gardening! Krista
National/International Master Gardening Factoids

Source: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Master_gardener_program

The first Master Gardener program was founded in 1973 by Washington State University Cooperative Extension in the greater Seattle area to meet a high demand for urban horticulture and gardening advice. The first trial clinic was held at the Tacoma Mall in 1972. When that was successful, the Master Gardener Program was officially established, a curriculum created, and training began in King County and Pierce County in 1973. The concept then spread to other U.S. states and Canadian provinces.

Master Gardeners are active in all 50 states in the United States and eight Canadian provinces. According to the 2009 Extension Master Gardener Survey, there are nearly 95,000 active Extension Master Gardeners, who provide approximately 5,000,000 volunteer service hours of per year to their communities.
As my good friend and mentor asserted, “Wow, what a short month!”. I can see spring right around the corner and it’s time to gear up for gardening, flowering, and projects.

As you are aware, Muscatine Master Gardeners received great news from Krista regarding award of funding for the application to the 2018 SNAP-Ed Master Gardener Min Grant Project!!

The Master Gardener 2018 Winter Webcast Series ‘Growing Together’ has started with the next opportunity on March 5th.

And our premiere event, “Art of Gardening in Muscatine County”; March 17th. I am sure it will be another sellout. This will be a time for us to shine and I am so thankful for the commitment expertise, experience and commitment of the planning committee. Good job and a special thanks to Susan.

Bob Bryant’s Glorious Ferns program at our last General meeting was incredible. I have a deep interest in ferns, so I am anxious for his upcoming Fern Walk in our own Wild Cat Den State Park. Good job Jane! I am planning something special for our next General meeting about fern propagation.

Lastly, I wish to share about training Heather and I attended Feb. 20th at ISU, Scheman Building. It was called the Iowa Small Farms Conference. Concurrent sessions included subjects ranging from ‘Interest in Hop Production’, to ‘Beginning Bee Keeping’ to ‘Setting the Table for Iowa’s Favorite Farmland Birds: Bobwhite Quail and Ring-Necked Pheasants’. It was great to see Heather’s friendly face as we put together a Drip Irrigation System in a hands-on exercise.

I plan to send out a link to the different presentations in a separate email to Muscatine Master Gardeners members.

(continued above right)
Call to order: Ed Moreno called meeting to order at 6:30

Rachel Horner Brackett introduces Bob Bryant, former director of the Wapsi Environmental Center, to talk about Ferns in our area.

Refreshment Break

Nancy Dew, Hy-Vee Nutritionist, talked about what was going on with the Donation Gardens outside of Hy-Vee Mainstreet. If you want to help, please contact Lynn.

Attendance: 21 people were present

Treasurer’s Report: Beginning balance as of 7/1/17 was $7,791.23 with total expenses of $853.02 through 12/11/17 with an ending balance of $6,938.21.

Approval of January Minutes: Minutes were approved as read

Upcoming Events:

Shelly has volunteered to host the Winter webinars at Extension Office

- February 26th - From Seed to Table 6-8 pm
- March 5th - Garden Helpers 6-8 pm
- March 19th - Food Security Partners 6-8 pm

March 17th - 8 am to 3:30 pm Art of Gardening at MCC

April 10th - 6:30 pm Master Gardener General Meeting at the Extension Office — See bottom page 7 for detailed info

May 12th - 9 am to noon Joint Plant Sale at Discovery Park in Muscatine

July 10th - Fern walk at Wild Cat Den with Bob Bryant. Time TBD

July 17th - Bucket Brigade at the West Liberty Fair Grounds - This year’s theme is Lighten Up. The colors are pale pink, white, and lavender. Your bucket must weigh less than 30 lbs.

Muscatine Island ISU Research Farm - TBD

(continued next page, GENERAL MEETING)
(Continued from previous page, GENERAL MEETING)

Other Items: Mary Danner will be bringing the signup sheets for committees to each General Meeting for anyone that is interested in working on specific projects to help get their hours.

Intern Mentoring Program update: 2 volunteers are needed to mentor the Muscatine Interns.

Donation Garden Mini Grant program update: 2018 has been approved for grants in the amount of about $3700.

MMG Scholarships- Due April 1st for High School Seniors. These are open to Muscatine, Wilton, L & M, and West Liberty. The student just needs to reside in Muscatine County.

Krista talked about people who were up for their 3 year background check. The benefit is that now the individual is covered in case of an accident while volunteering. Please get with Krista on the details of this if you have any questions.

Final Announcements: Log your hours! 1 hr education and .75 hrs of volunteer

Meeting adjourned at 8:23 pm

Submitted by Candi Whitmer, Secretary/Treasurer

April 10 General Meeting — Special Guest Speaker

Biography: Donald Lewis is a Professor and Extension Entomologist with the Iowa State University Department of Entomology. Dr. Lewis is responsible for outreach education on insect pest management in fruits, vegetables, turfgrass, trees and shrubs, and households.

Session Title: Iowa’s Common Vegetable Insect Pests

Session Description: Every year in the garden or landscape is a little different, but almost every year you can count on one or more insect pests to spoil your fun, your yield or your peace of mind. Old favorites such as Japanese beetles, squash bugs, and hornworms are still around, but what about the new "game changers" that have entered the state? Will the garden survive? Will we ever be the same? Come for the updates and bring your questions, anecdotes and observations to share.

Please take advantage of these volunteer opportunities

Mentoring an intern is a great opportunity to give back

It’s time to start planning to help with a donation garden in 2018

Dr. Donald Lewis is a great resource for the entire state of Iowa and we are fortunate to have him in Muscatine
FARMERS’ MARKET
By Susan Cradick
Master Gardener

We get a few days of nice weather and boy are we anxious for it to continue! Our thoughts turn to spring and our fingers ache for the soil!

One of our great opportunities for volunteer hours is the Farmers’ Market. These four hours of a Saturday morning provide one of the best ways to showcase Master Gardeners. Many of our interns have initially signed up at our booth for classes to be held in the fall. The type of people who frequent the Market are those who make good Master Gardener candidates. They pick up various literature we display on all aspects of gardening, perhaps try a recipe we’ve prepared featuring produce of the season, they’re greeted by warm, friendly Master Gardeners, questions are answered (or ISU website given to them), and then, given the opportunity to sign up and be a part of all the above!

The Market starts in May but we usually don’t start scheduling members until June when the weather is more stable. We don’t attend the Tuesday Farmers’ Market, just Saturdays. The Extension Office has the canopy, table (unless you want to use your own), tablecloth, and whatever literature you would like displayed (Krista has a number of options also available). The internet has many recipes (we like the ones that list calories and nutrition) that feature some fresh produce that week – such as a strawberry recipe when strawberries are in season, asparagus, etc. Providing samples is a draw that always bring in the market visitors!

This is a fun time unless the wind is threatening to pick up the canopy or the rain dampens the festive environment! You don’t have to set up if this is the case – but for 98% of the time the weather and participation is a very pleasant time. Contact a friend and sign up for a Saturday. We have Master Gardeners who have signed up to work since we started this feature but have not filled all of our Saturdays so need more of you to step up and try this opportunity. I don’t generally schedule anyone around a holiday and the choice is yours as to what Saturday you want – first come first served so give me you name and contact information ASAP. We will start June 2 and run through September. If you want someone to work with you but don’t have anyone in mind, I’ll give you another single person signing up. Sign up now, if your schedule changes you’re not locked in and we can switch with someone else, we’re flexible. Let me hear from you.

Thanks. Susan Cradick – 563-299-9114 or cradicks45@yahoo.com
ART OF GARDENING 2018

We’re on the countdown! Still time to get your reservation in for what promises to be a very exciting and worthwhile day! I’m looking forward to a day of expanding my brain cells (desperately needed) and visiting vendors, hoping for a door prize, having great weather (!), eating a delicious lunch and seeing old and new friends! Wow!

Many have signed up to host classes that they themselves are attending but as we work with Cindy Kress and Muscatine Community College we will be selecting and calling other Master Gardeners attending classes to be a host. Hope you will accept if you get a call! The Art of Gardening Committee also works with Cindy in putting together the folders and materials ahead of time and help the Friday afternoon before - getting rooms ready, vendors setting up, signs, etc. The Committee also is available Saturday (6-6:30 a.m.) to continue to help vendors and get registration table, etc. ready for the day. Many thanks to any of you who have agreed to help with this extra duty! If anyone wants to also help with this let me know, it all counts for your volunteer hours and the sessions for the day, along with Stump the Experts give you approximately 5 hours of education.

Thanks. Susan Cradick – 563-299-9114 or cradicks45@yahoo.com
Thank you Lynn and Emma Mae Pruitt!

I would like to express my appreciation and know I also represent the club in thanking Lynn and Emma Mae Pruitt for their fine example of what Master Gardening is all about! Both have been great members and on the Board and have shown great leadership and dedication to the Master Gardener programs and events. These two have participated in every event we’ve done, volunteered for jobs, given of their time selflessly and are great people to work with! Preparing the Newsletter and articles, picture taking, advice, support and encouragement. They have given, and continue to give – 110%! They’ve opened their gardens, dug up so many plants for plant sales, sit in on committees, etc. while still trying to keep up with their large garden acreage. The added “plus” are their great outlook and positive attitudes in everything they do – what a combination!

I’ve worn myself out just thinking about all they do! It’s not like they can run across town to participate, they have to drive from Nichols! And it’s like we got two-for-one, they’re a team!

My words cannot express my gratitude to these two wonderful people. They’ve made our club strong by their presence and involvement. I know they love what they do and they’re too modest to accept praise and “back-pats” but I hope they take this letter of appreciation as some small token from so many of us who sincerely appreciate all that they are and all that they do!

Susan Cradick and
Muscatine Master Gardeners

Pruitt response: Susan has been much too kind in her comments about us. We appreciate it very much but are just trying to emulate the many of you Master Gardeners who have come before us and shown us the way!

— Lynn and Emma Mae

Preparing for Master Gardener Reunion
June 2015

Becoming Master Gardeners
Annual Meeting December 2014
MUSCATINE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

2018 TREE AND PRAIRIE PLANT ORDER FORMS
(See Krista’s January 30 email for more details)

- NATIVE PRAIRIE PLANT SALE — 6 PACK PLUGS OR POTS — Final date to order is March 30, 2018. All orders must be pre-paid. Please send payment with order, make checks payable to: Muscatine SWCD. Plants will arrive in late May. The tentative pick up day is Thursday May 31, 2018. A postcard will be emailed/mailed with the exact pick up date and location.

- BARE ROOT STOCK – SOLD IN BUNDLES OF 5 AND 25 — The scheduled pick up day is Friday, April 27, 2018. A postcard will be mailed/emailed with the exact pick up date and location. Pick up is ONE DAY ONLY.

- LONGEST LASTING REPELENT — PROVEN EFFECTIVE FOR UP TO 6 MONTHS — Repels deer, rabbit and elk — Rain Resistant — Sold as powder, granular or liquid

Contact: MUSCATINE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT, 3500 OAKVIEW DRIVE, MUSCATINE, IA 52761 (563) 263-7944 x 3 or email holly.howard@ia.nacdnet.net
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.


Location: Muscatine County including City of Muscatine
City of Muscatine, Parks and Recreation Department
Location: Aquatic Center in Weeds 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>

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.

Gardening Wisdom

"I have found, through years of practice, that people garden in order to make something grow; to interact with nature; to share, to find sanctuary, to heal, to honor the earth, to leave a mark. Through gardening, we feel whole as we make our personal work of art upon our land."

– Julie Moir Messervy, The Inward Garden, 1995
What makes a flower fragrant?

By Bill Koellner, Lifetime Muscatine County Master Gardener

Have you ever wondered why some flowers, such as old fashioned roses have a lovely fragrance and others, especially some of the newer hybrids, have no fragrance.

Not all flower fragrances are pleasant. The corpse lily emits a fragrance likened to rotting flesh. Skunk cabbages emit a fragrance indicative of their name. But flowering plants do not release fragrances for the benefit of our human noses. Flowers use their scents to attract pollinators and communicate with other plants. Many flowers emit scents to aid reproduction. Flowers use their ability to create fragrance to lure pollinators and provide them with nectar as a food reward. Nectar-feeding creatures include many species such as bees, butterflies, moths, flies, and even mosquitoes, bats and hummingbirds. For carnivorous plants such as the Venus Fly trap and Pitcher plant, fragrance lures in insects to be captured and digested within the flower cavity for food.

Some flowering plants are non-discriminating using their fragrances to attract a host of insects and birds to fertilize their flowers. Others specialize in releasing scents that only appeal to a particular insect. An example is a specific yucca that relies on a single "yucca" moth for its pollination. In pollination, an insect comes into contact with pollen bearing flower parts and takes some pollen with it before it leaves. It then unknowingly deposits that pollen on another flower of the same species, pollinating the plant and satisfying its need for production of a future generation through seed.

Until the past few decades, the biochemical process of fragrance production remained unknown. In 1953, chemists identified some 20 chemicals in a rose’s fragrance. By 2006, that number was roughly 400. The nectaries that create these chemical fragrances usually are

(Continued next page, FRAGRANT)
found at the base of the male stamen inside the flower. To date, scientists have catalogued 1,700 different fragrance compounds produced by flowers, with some single plants having a mix of more than 100 compounds.

Nectaries secrete sugars and amino acids to form both nectar and fragrance molecules that are complex mixtures of low molecular weight compounds. Each fragrance compound is an organic molecule known as a volatile that vaporizes into a gas when released by the plant. These molecules are so small that if the average person had the same body size as the moon, the largest fragrance molecule would have the size of a marshmallow. Although flowers may appear identical in color or shape, no similar flowers have fragrances that are exactly the same because of the large diversity of volatile compounds that make up fragrance.

Fragrance is a signal that directs pollinators to a particular flower whose nectar or pollen is the food reward. Species pollinated by bees and flies have sweet fragrances, while those pollinated by beetles, for example, have strong musty, spicy, or fruity aromas. Little is known about exactly how insects respond to these compounds within floral scents, but it is clear that they are capable of distinguishing among the complex fragrance mixtures. Since much of our food production relies on insect-based pollination, think honeybees, we as humans therefore rely on a flower’s ability to produce fragrance for our food. Think about it.

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**Signs of Spring — Coming soon to your backyard!**
March Gardening Guide
(Courtesy of Midwest Gardening)

• **Plant cool-season flowers.** About six to eight weeks before your region's last average frost date, you can put in pansies, violas, lobelia, snapdragons and other cool-season flowers. They thrive in cool weather and tolerate frosts well. They're especially good in pots.

• **Plant cool-season annual edibles and perennial herbs outdoors.** These include seedlings you've started indoors or purchased at a garden center: parsley, cilantro, broccoli, cauliflower, onions, and Brussels sprouts.

• **Start seeds indoors as desired.** Most vegetable and annual flower seeds should be started six to eight weeks before your region's last average frost date -- and for most of the Midwest, that means starting seeds now. Check package directions for suggested timing, however.

• **Begin planting trees, shrubs and roses.** You can plant both bare-root and container-grown types as long as the soil is well-thawed and you can work it easily to the needed depth.

• **In the southern Midwest, plant radishes and spinach** as soon as the soil is thawed and you can work it easily. You also can plant potatoes -- St. Patrick's Day is the traditional planting day in this part of the country.

• **Rake old leaves.** You'll feel like you're giving your yard a fresh spring start when you remove the remnants of winter -- late-falling leaves, sticks and trash that may have blown in during the winter months.

• **Pull away winter mulch.** As soon as you see signs of new growth, pull away and lean up any straw or leaves you applied in the fall to protect perennials.

(continued above right)

• **Cut back perennials.** If you didn't do this in the fall, cut them back now.

• **Most trees and some shrubs can be pruned now.** Delay pruning spring-blooming shrubs so you don't trim off developing flowers. Most other shrubs will benefit from a little trimming now.

• **Prune roses, eliminating dead shoots.** Once roses send out tiny red buds that will turn into stems, they are ready for pruning. When the stems are about 1/2 inch long, the rose is pretty well out of dormancy. You should be able to tell what wood is alive and what has been killed by winter cold and should be removed.

• **Spray fruit trees with dormant oil.** Do this when the temperature is above 40 degrees. Dormant oil, available at garden centers, 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.
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 County Fair Office Garden – Bill Koellner 319-627-4545
Newsletter — Lynn Pruitt 563-260-0234
Muscatine Bridge Entry Sign Area — Chair position open
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

SOMETIMES OUR FATE RESEMBLES A FRUIT TREE IN WINTER. WHO WOULD THINK THAT THOSE BRANCHES WOULD TURN GREEN AGAIN AND BLOSSOM, BUT WE HOPE IT, WE KNOW IT. — Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

THE TREE OF SILENCE BEARS THE FRUIT OF PEACE. — Arabian Proverb
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

Rick Crooks receiving his Master Gardener Certificate. Congratulations to Rick and to the other new Master Gardeners!

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 —