Green Thumb
The Newsletter for the Polk County Master Gardeners
May 2016

ISU Polk County Extension
1625 Adventureland Drive, Ste A, Altoona, Iowa  Phone 515-957-5760

Sherri's View from the Garden

It's fitting that the advent of planting season coincides with Mother's Day, at least in our neck of the woods. All mothers are gardeners in one sense or another. My own wonderful mom, whom I lost this year, did not like to get her hands dirty. She loved the end result of any gardening project, though, whether it was fresh lettuce or a window box filled with salmon-colored geraniums. Her type of gardening, however, was more in the figurative sense - nurturing her children all along the way. She showered us with love, care, patience, and protection, modifying her approach when need be, but always with a sense of what would make us flourish. So if you're a mother, remember that you are forever helping your children to bloom where they are planted, no matter how old they may be. And if you are lucky enough to still have your mom in your life, cherish her every day. Happy Mother's Day!

"Remember that children, marriages, and flower gardens reflect the kind of care they get." ~ H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

Sherri Soich, Steering Committee Chair sherrisoich@gmail.com or 515-710-5665.

Plant Sale

Isabella Hurless-Banks and Stephanie McAdam will join the hosts of Gardening Today on WHO radio (1040am) Sunday 5-1-16 to visit about everything you need to know about the sale. Be sure to listen.

THINGS WE STILL NEED
Last year someone brought us a very nice donation of Oxalis and it sold very well. Unfortunately we don't know who it was and so far this year no-one has indicated they were bringing any so we are hoping someone out there will be kind enough to come through with a donation this year. AND.....we can also still use flats so keep them coming.
FRIDAY NIGHT MG PRE-SALE
In order to be admitted to shop at our pre-sale you MUST be wearing your MG name badge. Unfortunately, there will be NO exceptions to this rule. Also the sale begins at 5:00pm and no one will be admitted before that time unless they are a Friday volunteer. Each MG may bring one guest to the pre-sale. We are also asking that MG’s and guests bring their own flats, if possible. Remember, all sales are cash or check only.

Follow us on facebook. It can be accessed at https://www.facebook.com/PCMGPlantSale

Plant Sale Chairs Jen Jenkins, Isabella Hurless-Banks, and Jen Firzlaff
Art Show

Call for Artists for 2016 All-Iowa Master Gardener's Art Show

Be part of the fifth annual Master Gardener's Art Show. Entering the show is open to all Iowa Master Gardeners. The exhibition will be held at the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden, beginning with a reception on Thursday, August 18, 5:00-7:00 p.m. Applications are being accepted now through August 1, 2016. Entries must have a horticultural, floriculture, or gardening theme and must have been completed within the last 3 years. In addition to Best of Category designation, selected art work will be exhibited at the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden's North Gallery from August 19 thru October 16. Free standing art pieces may be entered in the Art Show, but it is not possible to display free standing objects in the North Gallery; these entries will be represented in a photo collage. Selections for art to be hung in the gallery will be based on Botanical Garden criteria for exhibits and selection will be part of the judging process.

Awards will be presented at the Art Show Reception open to the public, friends, and family at the Botanical Garden's Swartz and Walsh rooms on Thursday, August 18, 5:00-7:00 p.m.

If not selected to hang in the North Gallery, art needs to be picked up September 1, 7:30 p.m. at the Botanical Garden. If selected to be hung in the North Gallery, art needs to be picked up on November 17.

Categories
Drawing, Painting, Photography, Mixed Media, Fiber/Leather/Basketry, Ceramic, Metal, Glass, and Repurposed for Garden Art.

If an individual artist wishes to apply in more than one category, a separate application will need to be submitted for each piece of art work. You can enter more than one category and up to 3 entries can be made per category. Mail completed application(s) to Pat Reeves by August 1, 2016. Questions - contact Pat at patriciareeves2@gmail.com

Please check out the categories and enter the Art Show. The application is at this link. Please bring your friends and family to the Art Show Reception. Some pieces will be for sale.

Demonstration Garden

What a perfect day we had for the spring cleanup this year! Thanks to everyone who came out to kick off the gardening season with us and enjoy each others company. The garden is already blooming under your special care. Also, thanks to Tony Christensen, who slipped in later that day to till existing beds, a couple of new beds, and lawn areas awaiting turf improvement by Mike Boes. We can't wait to see how all of those spaces develop this year.

The first official work night at the Demo Garden is Monday, May 9th. On that night, and the following Thursday, May 12th, the focus will be on planting and mulching the various beds. Regular work nights will continue on Mondays throughout the season, and on Thursday evenings until summer education classes start on June 12th. As always, start time is 5 p.m., or whenever you can get there.

Co-Chairs, Ruth Doxon, Sandie Sydnes, and Diane Ackerman
Bus Trips 2016

PLEASE REGISTER SOON FOR OUR ONE DAY TRIP to be held on Saturday, June 4th - the seats are filling quickly. We will be heading to western Iowa to visit America's first aronia berry farm - Sawmill Hollow - in a beautiful Loess Hills setting. We will round out the trip with a visit to a beautiful private garden, tour the indoor production facility at Red Oak Greenhouse, and shop at Sherbondy's Nursery (highly recommended by our private garden owner). The registration form for the trip is available on the PCMG website or you can [click here].

SAVE THE DATE: We are heading to Minneapolis for our overnight tour. The trip dates are July 22 to July 24th. On our last visit to Minneapolis, many of us fell in love with Tangletown Gardens nursery and the owners' fabulous private gardens. For the visit in July, we will be joining the Tangletown Gardens' Garden and Art Tour. This is an annual event featuring some of the Twin Cities' best private gardens and local art. What a great opportunity to see some very cool private gardens with local art work on display in the gardens! We can't go to Minneapolis without spending some time at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum. With 1,137 acres of natural areas and public garden areas it is hard to see everything the garden has to offer in one visit. We will be staying right next to the Mall of America and we have scheduled one free evening for those who want to explore the mall. The registration form for this trip will be available soon! Please check the bus trip section of the Polk County Master Gardener website [http://www.extension.iastate.edu/polk/content/2016-bus-tours] for the registration form. 

Laurie Barrick, BARRICK8792@msn.com

Enabling Garden

We've had some spectacular weather the past few weekends. Thank you to everyone that assisted in the clean-up days, the garden is now ready for our Spring activities. We are very grateful for our volunteers; you all are the key the Enabling Garden's continued success. Many thanks!

Our regular work nights at the Enabling Garden have started on Tuesdays any time after 4:00 PM to dark, weather permitting. Please join us for fun, food and fellowship in the garden.

Our Season of Learning starts this month with our special guest, Maria Leeper, who will present on Container Vegetable gardening. Don't have lots of space? No problem, Marcia will show you how to maximize the space you do have to grow fresh produce. Please join us at 7:00PM on Tuesday, May 24th for what is sure to be an informative discussion that you won't want to miss!

Don't forget to check our Facebook and webpage to keep current with upcoming activities and any potential changes due to weather. [www.enablinggardenpcmg.org]

We hope to see everyone in the EG soon.

EG Co-Chairs: Sandie Hamilton, Paula Winslow, Christine Barker & Sharon Schoonover.
Discovery Garden

It is finally happening, the renovations have begun. The gazebo work has started, the perimeter fence is gone, the concrete has been poured for the south sidewalk, AND the contractor, for the pathway, is coming to do some preliminary work. All of the things we have been talking about are getting started and hopefully will be done sometime in May.

As I write this, a pickup date for the Greenhouse plants has not yet been determined, all the plants have been sorted, and I am sure we will know the exact date soon. (We will send out the appropriate info for this. *(Update, the date is/was 4-30 from noon to 2).* mf) Thanks to all of the Greenhouse staff and interns for all of the work involved with this project. It is a huge undertaking, and I am sure, a very thankless task at times.

Our first educational event will be happening on May 25th. Jennifer Joos, who is also a Master Gardener, as well as the Floriculture superintendent for the Ag building will be discussing "How and What to Enter for the State Fair."

Most of the Garden cleanup has been completed and planting can begin after the chance of frost has passed. We will also let everyone know when the pathway work is being done because we will not have access during that time.

Armed Forces Day is May 21st and Memorial Day is the 30th, so remember to fly your flag and thank military personnel for their past or current service.

"Green is the prime color of the world, and that from which its loveliness arises." Pedro Calderon de la Barca

Happy Spring

Co-Chairs:
Dean Brand drbrand@mediacommb.net tel:515-360-0774,
Jean Roe tel:515.205.8706 ljroe@q.com,
Patrick Schmitt schmittpatrickj@gmail.com tel:515.279.9645,
Cheree Tilton tiltoncm@gmail.com tel:515.262.0488

Community Requests

Planting day at the Terrace Hill Mansion, 2300 Grand Ave, is May 13th. Planting starts at 9 AM and lunch will be served. PLEASE BRING your gardening tools. Please send me an email if you are able to help. Thanks! Theresa Garrison tdgarrison61@q.com.
Farmers' Market

The PCMG Booth will be open for business at the Des Moines Downtown Farmers' Market on the third Saturday of each month, May through September. While we always answer (or try to answer) general gardening questions from Market patrons, we also feature one or more special gardening topics at each appearance. Topics from prior years include things like Roses, Water Gardens, Hydrangeas, Butterflies, Pets in the Garden, Container Gardening, Ornamental Grasses, Dahlias, Pollinators, and Canning, to name a few. If you have a special gardening plant or passion that would make a good feature topic, please let one of us know. We're always looking for new ideas and would love to host you at the Booth as a featured expert.

This year, our third Saturday dates are: May 21, June 18, July 19, August 20 and September 17. We staff the booth in two multi-person shifts each Saturday (6:45 - 9:45 a.m. and 9:45 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.), so you are never answering questions alone. We currently have a full complement of volunteers for our May, June and July dates, but there are still openings in August and September. Please use our VolunteerSpot page (CLICK HERE) to sign-up!

Note: Other than the date and time, don't worry about the descriptors on VolunteerSpot when you sign up as a volunteer for Farmers' Market. When we created the sign up slots, we inadvertently used the term "Farmers' Market Booth Volunteer" for the early shift and "PCMG Farmers' Market Booth" for the late shift. But all PCMG Farmers' Market volunteer openings are the same as far as duties are concerned.

Co-Chairs Matt Doré (matt.dore@drake.edu), Sherri Soich (sherrisoich@gmail.com), and Randy Campbell (campbellrd@mchsi.com).

Greenhouse

Saturday (April 30, 2016) was our last greenhouse work day. We have no seeding, transplanting, or potting to be done. Help setting up for the Plant Sale and watering are our two primary activities fro May 4.

Mark your calendars. May 14 is the give away day for non-profits at the Greenhouse. Any organization that is a non-profit can get plants that day at no charge. No need to call or register. Just show up. Doors open at 9:00 AM.

Ball Seed Trial for Master Gardeners

Wanted: Master Gardeners to participate in the Ball Seed trials. Most of these plants are not yet available in the public market. The information gleaned provides information to Ball Seed about the plants' habits and hardiness and assists them in making decisions about introducing the plants to the commercial market. Plants will be distributed Wed. May 4th. 9am-11am. Only MGs willing to maintain records through the summer and submit final paperwork should participate. See Kay Oliver at the MG greenhouse at 1427 34th Ave. SW, Altoona. (some know this as NE 56th street between Altoona & Pleasant Hill)

Greenhouse co-chairs: Bob Helvey, Alda Helvey, Jean Schustek, and Cheryl Fridl
Garden Tour

Treat yourself to a tour of gardens lovingly designed and maintained by local Master Gardeners in established Clive and West Des Moines neighborhoods. From backyard sanctuaries with garden art to a faith community's suburban produce farm for local food pantries, the 16th annual Polk County Master Gardener Tour features something for everyone.

Tickets will be $15.00 each and available soon on-line at Eventbrite, at May Plant Sale and PCMG Farmer's Market booth on the third Saturday in May and June and at the Polk County Extension Office and retailers after June 1.

For a poster to print and share, Click here.

Gardeners Needed
The Garden Tour is June 25 and the host gardeners are busy preparing now to wow all of our attendees. If you would like to volunteer your gardening skills to help a host garden prepare, please send Jan Jordan an email and she will include your name on a list for the garden owners. Thank you and happy spring! See you in the Garden!

Jan Jordan, Garden Tour volunteer, jejordan@q.com
Extension programs are available to all without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, or disability.

Polk County Master Gardeners, 1625 Adventureland Drive, Suite A, Altoona, IA 50009