Green Thumb
The Newsletter for the Polk County
Master Gardeners
August 2014

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

Alda’s Article

Volunteer Spotlight - Ball Seed Trip
This month I want to highlight a group of Master Gardeners who attended the Ball Seed Trip July 24-25. These people donated their own time, paid their registration fee, the hotel room and other expenses. Ball Seed offers select customers the opportunity to see the test gardens and tour the facilities.

Representing PCMG were: Bob and Jackie Kaufman, Cathie Law, Mary Farlow, Peggy Goetzke, Cheree Tilton, Jean Schustek, Isabella Hurless-Banks, Stephanie McAdam and Sandie Hamilton.

The trip began with an early bus ride to Geneva, IL. First visit was to Planters Palate where people could purchase and sightsee. Many from the group bought plants to bring back home. The second stop was a reception and dinner at the Ball Seed Test Gardens. The complex is 15 acres with 10 acres of plants in a variety of settings.

After dinner everyone boarded an excursion boat that toured the Fox River with more food and drinks.

Volunteers from all three of the gardens should now have catalogs from this trip for their use next year. The most common comment among participants was “the gardens are phenomenal, I want to do this trip next year.”

On Friday, attendees had choices to attend classes, tour the labs or register for presentations. Most of the group attended the container gardening demonstration which was fabulous.
Dr. Allan Armitage, from Georgia, was the keynote speaker during the luncheon. He is an author of numerous books and articles. He reminded everyone that gardening is a people business.

Several Master Gardeners were impressed with the Bounce and Big Bounce Impatiens. These are a mildew resistant variety.

August Garden Tips

*Colorful plastic golf tees can be stuck in the ground to mark the location of dormant plants such as spring bulbs or perennials.
*Remove old plants which have stopped producing to eliminate a shelter for insects and disease organisms
*Every weed that produces seed means more trouble next year. Control weeds before they go to seed.
*Clean up fallen rose and peony leaves. They can harbor disease and insect pests over the winter if allowed to remain on the ground.

Alda Helvey, Steering Committee Chairman alda.helvey@assoc-serv.com 225-2563, cell 515-720-9951

Discovery Garden

I cannot believe how fast summer is flying by, it seems we were just picking up our plants from the Greenhouse, and now it is time for them to be on display. Yes, it is time for the state fair. The gardens are all looking great, thanks to the hard working gardeners, and of course some wonderful weather.
We will be displaying some pieces of metal artwork, a new sitting area, and beautiful flowers so come and see us. MGs will be there every day from 8 am to 8 pm.

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Enabling Garden

Our Season of Learning at the Enabling Garden continues with our talk "Tomato Tasting" by PCMGs Bill and Judy Goshorn. Regardless of it is a tom-a-toe or tom-au-toe doesn't matter; come join us for an epicurean delight of fresh tomatoes. The program starts at 7:00PM on Tuesday, August 26th. Bring a lawn chair and get ready to sample these late summer beauties from the vegetable garden.

Come join us for the final installment of Yoga in the Enabling Garden on Saturday, August 16th at 9:00AM. Please bring a mat and/or a towel as well as your water bottle. The session is free to all and designed for all skill levels, so come get your weekend started off right with some relaxation and stretching. A big thank you to Blue Lotus Yoga for providing these classes free of charge.

Regular work nights at the Enabling Garden continue on every Tuesday starting around 5:00PM. As always, please join us for fun, food and fellowship in the garden. (Generally, we will be working even when it is hot, but please use your own judgment with the potential for extreme heat that often comes with the turn of the calendar to August!)

Enabling Garden volunteers have created a Facebook group page. Check it out and join at https://www.facebook.com/groups/EnablingGarden

Thanks again to all of our volunteers that help to make the garden beautiful.

EG Co-Chairs: Christine Barker, Sandie Hamilton, & Sharon Schoonover

Greenhouse

So far, the interest in evening work days at the greenhouse next year has been underwhelming. From the last two months, we have a total of seven people who have expressed interest. So. We'll try one more month. If you have interest in working at the greenhouse in the evening, send us an email (bob@tsmcgrp.com) and we'll add your name to the list.

A big thank you from us to Sherry Swihart. Sherry has volunteered to be our April Captain. Welcome to the Greenhouse Team. Alda & Bob Helvey (a) 515-224-6424 bob@tsmcgrp.com

Farmers' Market

The Polk County Master Gardeners' Downtown Farmers' Market Booth has led a charmed life so far in 2014-we've had great weather for each of our first three appearances at the Market. (Knocking on some wood now). Our booth at the Southwest corner of 3rd and Court Avenue is perfectly located near one of the Market's permanent live music venues and just north of the El Salvadoran Pupusa stand.

We've brought demonstration plants, flowers, produce and other visual aids to the Market each time, as well as free seed samples, so we've had no trouble attracting visitors to our booth. In fact, we've averaged over 200 contacts at each appearance and have recruited a couple of dozen prospective Master Gardeners. If you aren't aware of our Farmers' Market project, Polk County Master Gardener volunteers staff our booth and respond to general lawn and gardening questions from Market patrons. We also provide special information about our feature gardening topics, which change each month. We always bring along lots of ISU Extension publications as resource material, and we make referrals to the Hortline experts where needed. We have a great time and earn service hours in the process.

At our next appearance at the Downtown Farmers' Market (Saturday, August 16) the feature topics will include "Canning Garden Produce" and "Attracting Butterflies to the Garden." If you enjoy the Farmers' Market and like chatting about gardening (and what Master Gardener doesn't?) you can volunteer to help by contacting Sherri Soich (sherrisoich@q.com). See you at the Market!

Chairs: Matt Dore matt.dore@drake.edu, Sherri Soich (sherrisoich@q.com), & Randy Campbell
**Gardeners' Show House**

Summer is the slow season for the Show House, but we are starting work on the fall and holiday exhibits. Our September show, "Masterpiece" is full, and will open on September 6th. We are working with the Central Iowa Garden Railway Society again on our holiday exhibit, and need theme ideas. If you are interested in railroading, join us for our planning meeting on Monday, August 4th, at 6:30, at the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden.

Contact Mary Howell-Williams 556-3684 mhwp@mcmsi.com Ann Goecke: 277-4632 goeckeae@aol.com if you want to find out more.

**Education Opportunities**

Our own projects offer talks at the gardens and the list is finally complete. See the PCMG web page for details and a link to a printable page.

Joe Hannan would like to formally invite each of you to the 2014 Fruit and Vegetable Field Day, ISU Horticulture Station, Gilbert, IA on Monday August 11th. A welcome from Dr. Jeff Iles, chair of the Horticulture Department, Iowa State University, will begin the field day and the program will go from 2:15 to 5:15 p.m. Supper will begin at 5:30 p.m. The Horticulture Research Station is located at 55519 170th St., just north of Ames. The cost for attending is $25 if registered by August 4th. A limited number of registrations will be available after August 4th for $35. For more information and to register for the field day, please visit, [http://www.aep.iastate.edu/hort](http://www.aep.iastate.edu/hort)

**Summer Webinar Series**

The theme for the 2014 Summer Webinar Series is Totally Trees. As the Emerald Ash Borer marches across the state, homeowners need to be prepared to recognize signs of damage, know what control options are available, and consider alternatives for replacement trees. All sessions will be held from 6:30-8:00 p.m. on the dates indicated below. The fee for each session is $5 per Master Gardener and $10 for non-MGs. Polk County will be hosting the following sessions. Please share this information as you visit with the public so that they know they can attend as well.

- **Thursday August 14** - Donald Lewis & Mark Shour, ISU Extension Entomologists, will speak on Tree Pests, with a focus on recent pests of trees such as the Emerald Ash Borer and the impact of these pests on the Iowa landscape.
- **Thursday September 4** - Jeff Iles, Extension Nursery and Landscape Specialist, will speak on Ash Alternatives, providing ideas of other species of trees to consider planting in the home landscape.

**Save the Date**

Once again in 2014, there will a Fall Horticulture Conference in Polk County. The date has been moved to the first Saturday in October - the 4th. It will still be an all day conference (6 hours of MG education) with snacks and a buffet lunch provided. We have confirmed that Melinda Myers will present two different topics and they will be different topics than what she presented at the Upper Midwest MG Conference. More details and registration information will be available soon.

**Fall Class needs Coordinators**

Polk County is planning to participate in the ISU Fall 2014 Master Gardener classes. Please consider whether you would want to volunteer as a class coordinator. It would involve being available the evenings of Sept. 9th and Dec. 2, as well as 2 or 3 Tuesday evenings between those dates. It's not hard, you get to meet the newest interns and help them learn.

Also, ISU will not be offering a winter/spring series of classes in 2015 so if you know anyone who is thinking about getting started in the program, have them email mfarlow@iastate.edu right away.
Community interest

If you know anyone who is interested in mastering the art of canning, freezing and dehydrating foods, please refer them to the ISU "Preserve the Taste of Summer" website: www.ucs.iastate.edu/mnet/preservation/home.html

Here, people can register for up to 8 online lessons, which cover food safety, pressure canning, water bath canning, pickling, and making jam. The minimum fee is $25 for 3 online lessons or $50 for 4 online lessons and a 4-hour hands-on workshop. For people who have completed the required online courses, the following hands-on preservation workshops will be offered Saturdays, 9 am-1 pm, at the ISU Extension Polk County office, 1625 Adventureland Dr., Suite A, Altoona, IA 50009. Register at least one week in advance. Contact Mary Krisco at 515-957-5787 or mkrisco@iastate.edu. (For adults aged 18 years and older.)

Aug. 9, 2014: Hot Water Bath Canning (Salsa Making) and Freezing Workshop
Aug. 16, 2014: Pressure Canning Workshop
Aug. 30, 2014: Jams and Dehydrating Workshop
Many thanks! (Mary Krisco, MS, RD, 515-957-5787)

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Central Iowa Water Gardener Judy Anderson has been asked to find new homes for some babies of a 15 foot long Koi. You can contact Judy at andrsnjudy@mchsi.com

Demonstration Garden

We had great weather and a great turnout for the Open House again this year. Over 150 people attended, and it was a good time for Iowa Public Television to be on hand to film. While I haven't heard officially, I think their presentation of all 3 ISU Polk County MG gardens is the evening before the State Fair begins. Check your IPTV publication or internet. And a big thank you to the garden leads, the presenters, and the Open House committee, including Shelley Bain for leading the planning. Also, thanks to Susan Mahedy-Ridgway for coordinating the Heart of Iowa Classical Guitar Society's performance. It added to a nice event.

Thank you to Ruth Doxon for leading the New Hope Assembly of God women's group through the garden on July 10; thanks also to Susan Travis for coordinating the waterers this summer and to Plumber Jerry (Ferrell) for getting the 3 hose carts lined up. It clearly makes a difference!

As you may have noticed, we seem to be getting rain only on Thursday nights this summer! Or at least, so it seems since we have had cancellations for classes at the Demo Garden 3 times. The "Totally Trees" session has been moved to August 28; "Gardening in the Technology Age" has been moved to September 4 at 6 pm instead of 7 pm. Please mark your calendars accordingly. We've had nice crowds, averaging 45 attendees for the first 3 classes so far.

Year of change: this year we have had some schedules change and we anticipate the same happening for next year. For 2015, we will have a vacancy in the Herb Garden. If you have an interest in helping with that area for next year, please let me know. For this year, while we don't need a new lead for the main rose garden, we could use assistance. Additionally, I am looking for a lead or co-leads for the Dwarf Conifer bed and possibly the Ornamental Grasses. Some of these areas have less planning and more maintenance (code for weeding!) so please consider what your schedule and interest allows. Even if you don't have experience in an area, taking on a garden bed or partnering with someone else is a great way to learn.

My next focus will be on finding my replacement(s) as I will not be leading the Demonstration Garden next year. If you are interested in leading and/or participating in a committee, please let Margaret Spikes (mhsipes@gmail.com or 418-3460) know. Because we have so much talent out there, I may be calling you J! More to come....enjoy your summer!

Margaret Spikes, chair, margaretspies@wellsfargo.com
Garden Tour

The annual PCMG Garden Tour was held on June 21. Five hundred seventeen tickets were sold.

On behalf of the Garden Tour Committee, I would like to thank the Host Gardeners for another successful garden tour. All of the gardens looked fantastic! Also many thanks to all of the garden preparation and tour day volunteers who helped make the day a success. It just couldn't have happened without you!

I would like to extend a big "Thank you!" to the Garden Tour Committee - Linda Brice, Tami Fletcher, Theresa Greiner, Beth Kramer Redding, Karen Tandy, Kathy Winter, Jim Winter They worked hard to organize a top-notch event and managed to have fun while doing so!

A very special thank you to Mary Howell Williams for donating a set of 12 photo tiles for the raffle.

Again, many thanks to the Garden Hosts - Barbara Bell, Kate Byus, Elsie Monthei, Rita Perea, Troy Peters, Ann Proctor, Anna Ryon and Mary Lou Woods.

If you are interested in purchasing additional copies of the full-color 2014 PCMG Garden Tour guidebook, they are available at the Extension Office for $2 each.

Michelle Walke, Garden Tour Chair 225-8265, mwalkedesign@mac.com

Gardener's Art Show

Be part of the third, hopefully annual, judged Master Gardener's Art Show. The exhibition will beheld at the Windsor Heights Community Center, in Colby Park, 6900 School Street, Windsor Heights on Friday, August 29, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Application deadline extended to August 11, 2014.

The show is open to all Polk County Master Gardeners and Master Gardeners from some surrounding counties. The entries need to have a horticultural, floriculture, or gardening theme. In addition to Best of Category designation, selected art work will be exhibited at the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden from September through November. These selections will be based on Botanical Garden criteria for exhibits and selection will be part of the judging process.

Click here for application. Questions - contact Pat at patriciareeves2@gmail.com

Recurring MG Calendar!

Monday evening work nights at Demonstration Garden, Urbandale.
Tuesday & Saturday mornings Botanical Center Gardeners Show House work sessions.
Tuesday evening work nights at Enabling Garden, Altoona.
Wednesday evening work nights at Discovery Garden at the Iowa State Fairgrounds.

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