Sherri's View from the Garden

It's December. What's a gardener to do? By now, almost all of the leaves have been raked, spring bulbs have been planted, and gardening tools have been cleaned, sharpened, and oiled. Our thoughts turn to the holidays. Is there gardening to be done in the dead of winter? There are still tasks to keep a gardener busy, such as winter pruning, snow removal, bird-feeding, and tree and shrub inspection. More fun to contemplate, however, is the plan for next year's ever-changing landscape. On a sunny December day, bundle up and stroll around the grounds. Take a few photographs or measure your beds to take stock of the bones of your garden. On a blustery, snowy day, flip through gardening books or magazines and think of spring, both last and next. Which flower made your heart sing whenever you came upon it? Which space needs a whole new approach? Which mistake taught you a lesson you won't forget? I, for one, will not plant unmarked varieties in the front and middle of my beloved zinnia garden assuming they won't soar to five feet. I may even try to map things out on paper for the first time.

"Every gardener knows that under the cloak of winter lies a miracle... a seed waiting to sprout, a bulb opening to the light, a bud straining to unfurl. And the anticipation nurtures our dream."  ~ Barbara Winkler

Happy dreaming in December.

Sherri Soioch, Steering Committee Chair sherrisoiich@gmail.com or 515-710-5665.

Demonstration Garden
By the time you read this, the roses will have been put to bed, and that means the demo garden is officially ready for its long winter nap. Thanks to all who pitched in to finish that final chore. It's been a year of transition, and we are grateful to each of you who helped in big and small ways to support the garden's continuing success.

On that note, we would like to share some wonderful pictures taken this past summer by local photographer Nancy Heather Brown. Here is a link to her Flickr album of demo garden photos: https://www.flickr.com/photos/cre8tivefriends/albums/72157659308415193

Best wishes to everyone for a safe and happy holiday season with plenty of time to share with those who matter most to you. One last thought: Even though the growing season is behind us, a stroll through the garden on a sunny December day or after a fresh snowfall can have its own rewards. Maybe we'll see you there!

Co-Chairs, Ruth Doxon and Diane Ackerman

Discovery Garden

Best wishes to you and your families for a wonderful Holiday season, and Peace and Prosperity in 2016.

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

Enabling Garden

As the Holiday season approaches, we would like to express our gratitude towards all of our volunteers. It was a busy year at the Enabling Garden.

We want to give a shout out to everyone who participated in the Enabling Garden this year. From volunteering for the Children's Garden committee, to planting, pulling weeds, watering, from donating baked goods, to bringing treats on a weekly basis, to coordinating our publicity, to actively fundraising, all of
these contributions are what makes a volunteer organization work!

We are looking forward to a fantastic 2016 season. Thank you and have a blessed Holiday season.

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

**Garden Tour**

*save the date*

The 2016 Garden Tour will be in Clive and West Des Moines on June 25th, 2016. Eight wonderful gardens will be on the tour! We will have a Volunteer Spot Website set up in March where you'll be able to volunteer to be a garden host, to help advertise, or to help prepare one of these wonderful gardens. This tour is a wonderful inspiration for all gardeners.

*Jerry Swinton, Garden tour chair, jersher4@gmail.com*

**Congratulations from ISU**

Colleen Sattler was named as second place winner in the ISU 2016 Master Gardeners in Action Photography contest.

The top ten Master Gardeners reporting continuing education hours so far include PCMG Julie Robeson.

The top ten Master Gardeners reporting volunteer hours so far include Bob Helvey, Cathie Law, Patrick Schmitt.

**Greenhouse**

Thanks to Dawn Kasotia, the PCMG Greenhouse is on Facebook!!!!! Please click on our URL (https://www.facebook.com/pcmggreenhouse/) and Like us. Then invite all your friends to do the same.

We have set the dates for the 2016 Greenhouse Lab on 1/23/16, 1/27/16, and 1/30/16.
We now need 10 education hours to recertify. The lab provides 2 ½ education hours. We have 96 slots spread over the three days and MANDATORY attendance for 44 Trainees. That leaves 52 slots to be filled by PCMGs and then Trainees from Warren, Madison, and Dallas counties. If you want to attend one of the labs send an email to cfridl@aol.com prioritizing your date availability. (#1-01/23/16; #2-01/30/16; #3-01/27/16) Don’t omit a date. If you are unavailable on any of those dates indicate that in your email. The cutoff date to apply is 12-15-2015.

DO NOT JUST SHOW UP. YOU WILL NOT HAVE A SPOT AND WILL NOT BE ABLE TO PARTICIPATE.

Greenhouse Volunteers are needed for the next growing season. We need volunteers to water on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday in February, March, April and May (through May 14th). In February we need two people each day, in March we need three and in April and May we need four. The watering periods will be scheduled so someone with a key can give access to all the volunteers at the same time. The time may differ for each day depending on the availability of the person with the key. If you're interested in volunteering please send an email to Jean Schustek (jean.schustek@gmail.com) with the day(s) and month(s) you want to volunteer.

New Hours Reporting System
A big thank you to the 320 PCMGs who have reported 2015 hours so far.

ISU has made major changes in the Hours reporting system but the web address is the same. http://mastergardenerhours.hort.iastate.edu/ You'll need to click on "Sign In to VRS" in the gray box on the left. Your Username (email) and password will be the same as the previous system. There is a Quick Tour Video on the home page to explain some of the changes.

Please note:
Continuing Education Requirement is listed under Category field. Hours entered here should only be learning time. Travel for Education is one of the option, under Polk Local Projects and needs to be a separate entry from class time.

If you choose "Other" under Category, the field below it (Local Project or Sub-Category) will have a pull down menu with a list of the Polk County projects for you to choose from. So you no longer have to type out the project name.

Just like the old system, the Description field is the place for you to make notes about what you did for that project for that day.

Under the MG Profile tab, there are 4 tabs so you can see and/or change your personal information.
Gift Ideas

2016 Garden Calendar - Guests of the Garden
For many, hosting birds, butterflies, bees, and other guests in the garden is one of the most rewarding aspects of gardening. As each month passes you'll find striking, close up photos of those visitors who can captivate the gardener with their unique personalities. Some guests, however, can be annoying and frustrating. Whether or not we invite garden guests, they will come. Our gardens will be more successful if we plan ahead for their visits. This year's calendar offers ways to welcome invited guests and hints to deter those who drop by to help themselves.

Be sure to pick up enough copies for yourself and for holiday gifts. Gardeners or anyone who enjoys the outdoors and the beauty of nature alike will certainly thank you. They are available at the Extension Office for $7.00 each.

We still have autographed copies of Small Space Gardening by Melinda Myers, the featured speaker at the Fall 2016 Horticulture Conference. They are $15.00 each. If interested, email mfarlow@iastate.edu. I can have them at the front desk if you can't get to the office when I'm available.

There were several local vendors with garden-related items at our Fall Conference as well. Contact Mary Howell-Williams, Pat Reeves or Libby Young if you're looking for ideas.

What do you think?

Now that Facebook has become so popular, Dawn Kasotia has set up a page which is for PCMGs only. Some folks have suggested we add an electronic version of our PCMG Directory. Let Mary know your opinion and whether all the same information should be included.
PCMG Winter Program classes

Classes will start at 6:30 but you are welcome to join us for soup and bread starting at 5:30. Feel free to bring anything you want to share that would be a good addition to our meal.

January 7th
Harry Hillaker
Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship
"Historical Climate trends and Extremes in Iowa"

February 4th
Tivon Feeley
Iowa Department of Natural Resources
"The Fight to Protect Trees"

March 3rd
Lorin Knapp
"A Garden on the Edge"

April 7th
Greenhouse and Plant Sale
"What's New at the .......?"

*Paula Winslow, program committee*