



# The Green Thumb

## *Monthly News and Updates for Polk County Master Gardeners*



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### **Message from the Steering Committee Chair**

Hello All. I hope that you had a beautiful Thanksgiving and now that December is here, the Holidays will be in full swing. In this busy time, take a few minutes away from the hustle and bustle to catch your breath and appreciate your many blessings!

Each of you brings a special gift to the Master Gardener organization: YOU! Thank you for your engagement and time.

This month I had the blessing of catching up with Marialice Fecht. As you will see in the picture, Marialice had a significant volunteer history with Hospice before ever becoming a Master Gardener, so she understands the value of volunteerism and the impact it makes not only on the volunteer, but the community. She shared her passion and zest for learning and gardening:



*Christine: How and when did you become interested in gardening? And, what led to you be a Master Gardener?*

*Marialice: We were from a farm in Eastern Iowa, so I have always been around it. Additionally, many in my family have been involved in gardening or a naturalist at some point. Our daughter was an intern with Neal Smith National Wildlife Refuge while she was at Iowa State University, so I come by it naturally. When I was working I didn't have much time to garden, but when I retired I became more interested. A work friend, Val Edison, asked if I would like to take the class and become a Master Gardener. We both graduated in the MG class of 2019.*

*Christine: Flowers/Vegetables/Other?*

*Marialice: Flowers (I would like to learn a lot more about them!)*

*Christine: When you are in the garden, what brings a smile to your face?*

*Marialice: Seeing the beauty, all in concert together: flowers, plants, insects, butterflies, birds and even people!*

*Christine: What do you want MGs and others to take away from the program?*

*Marialice: You go into the Master Gardener class to learn and get your certificate, but that is just the beginning. What you will learn from the people you interact with on the projects is priceless.*

**Have a wonderful Holiday Season and a Happy New Year!**

**Christine Barker**  
**Steering Committee Chair**

Looking for more information on the Steering Committee? [View our guidelines here.](#)

## **Green Thumb - Sneak Peek**

Check here for a quick list of volunteer and continuing education opportunities mentioned in this month's Green Thumb.

Check out more details in the appropriate news article.

**Volunteer Opportunities**

**Continuing Education**

- 2020 Garden Tour - garden sponsor
- Discovery Garden - communications and leadership opportunities
- Nominating Committee co-chair positions
- Online webcast opportunities (see bottom of newsletter)
- Webcast at the Extension Office:
  - Dec. 11th at 2pm - Local Bees and Organic Vegetables

#### 2020 Program Committee dates:

- Jan 9: Tivon Feeley: topic TBD 2.5 hours education
- Feb 13 : Dr. Thomas Rosberg: topic TBD, 2.5 hours education
- March 12: Aaron Steil: Gardening Under Lights & information on Reimen Gardens, 2.5 hours education
- April 2: 1 hour of education by Marcia Leeper, topic TBD

## Program Committee

Chair: [Mary Poulter](#)



### Educational Opportunities For 2020 Year

- Thursday, Jan 9: Tivon Feeley: 2.5 hours education, Topic TBD
- Thursday, Feb 13: Dr. Thomas Rosberg: "Exploring the Natural History of Iowa's Most Wild and Pristine Places." A presentation on four of Iowa's most significant landscapes from the perspective of natural history - a look at the loess hills, fens, paleozoic plateau, and eastern Iowa sand prairies. 2.5 hours education
- Thursday, March 12: Aaron Steil: Gardening Under Lights & information on Reimen Gardens, 2.5 hours education
- Thursday, April 2: Spring Celebration: Awards and one hour of education by Marcia Leeper, Container Gardening

### January 9, 2020 Agenda

5:45 p.m. Potluck begins  
 6:15 p.m. Housekeeping/introduction  
 6:30 p.m. Tivon Feeley, tree related topic  
 9:00 End of evening

### Volunteers needed to bring soup for Program Nights

Contact [Mary Poulter](#) if you can bring a crockpot of soup to share. Others are encouraged to bring side dishes.

## Demonstration Garden

The official start of winter is nearing. Should the snow fall, take a moment to enjoy the beauty of winter. Flakes resting on the dried grasses, evergreen bushes and barren branches can be quite beautiful.

Thank you to all our volunteers. Take the time to enjoy whatever Holiday it is that you participate in and do not let the stress of the season get you down. Give yourself an occasional moment to relax, peruse your favorite garden catalog and start dreaming of spring.

Merry Christmas!



Co-chairs:  
[Ruth Doxon](#)  
(515) 253-9115  
[Sandie Sydnes](#)  
(515) 276-1497

Visit our [website](#) and like us on [Facebook](#).



## Discovery Garden

A Hidden Gem

Hello all. Once again, we say thank you to each and every one of you who have contributed in anyway in making our Discovery Garden another successful entity in 2019. Let us also be mindful and thankful, during this holiday season, for all the gifts which are continually shared through the Master Gardener Program and through our Discovery Garden. We appreciate you all very much. Thank You.



Discovery Garden (DG) Communications Team: **We currently have an opening on our Communications Team** with a heavy emphasis on the administrative side of the DG business. This work is something you can complete from your home using your own computer and printer. This is a great way for you to earn MG volunteer hours working on your own schedule with timelines developed by the DG Communications Team and the DG Co-Chairs.



**Thursday, August 13  
through Sunday, August  
23, 2020 - 2020**

If you are comfortable with computer work, are well versed in gmail and computer software programs and have an interest; **please contact any Discovery Garden Co-Chair for more information.** Some of the duties could include: writing and editing an article each month for the Green Thumb; preparing and editing monthly DG emails; mailing correspondence;

## Iowa State Fair

### Contact:

Co-chairs:

[Dean Brand](#)

(515) 360-0774

[Joyce Carle](#)

(515) 229-6769

[Jean Roe](#)

(515) 205-8706

[Patrick Schmitt](#)

(515) 657-1937

[View our website](#)  
[join our Facebook group.](#)



updating the DG gmail contact listings; preparing labels and signage for the DG garden beds; attending meetings with the DG Communications Team (typically a few times a year); coordinating efforts with the ISU Extension and Outreach-Polk County Office as needed; assisting with the communications work for MG volunteers at the Iowa State Fair shifts; preparing agendas, letters, correspondence and research on behalf of the Co-Chairs; and other various administrative work, as needed.

Co-Chair Leadership at the DG: **Please contact any Co-Chair if you have an interest in a potential leadership position as a Co-Chair.** We, as Co-Chairs, manage the business side of the Discovery Garden; the people side of the Garden, as well as, solve problems which may arise on an ongoing basis. **We would love to have some new MG's step up for future leadership. Please join us at our Discovery Garden!**

### Upcoming Dates:

**Spring Dinner and Planning Meeting - Mid-March date to be announced**

## Enabling Garden

As the cold and snowy weather draws near I know that many of us dread these months, but remember it serves as a rest for all of us so that we can flower all the more brightly when Spring comes. Take time to enjoy your friends & family.

With Holiday season approaches, we would like to express our gratitude towards all of our volunteers. 2019 was as busy as ever at the Enabling Garden. Thank you to everyone who participated in the Enabling Garden this year. Your time and expertise are critical to make a volunteer organization like the EG work!

We'll be looking forward to seeing everyone in the 2020 season. Many thanks and have a blessed season.

Co-chairs:

[Sandie Hamilton](#)

[Christine Barker](#)

[Paul Satre](#)

[Rosie Surber](#)

[Judy Goshorn](#)

**Connect with us on**  
**our [website](#)**  
**or keep up to date on**  
**our [Facebook Group](#)**



## Polk County Master Gardeners

# Garden Tour

June 20, 2020 9am-4pm

featuring gardens in Urbandale and Clive

We have a activities subcommittee planning meeting scheduled for **January 9, 2020 at 6:00 pm** at Kathy Cole's home. Anyone interested in help plan education offerings and activities please come to the meeting and bring your ideas! **We are also looking for volunteers to help with ad sales** for our brochure to help cover our expenses. Anyone interested in that please let me know! We will also be having a meeting on **Thursday January 14th at Jethros' BBQ in Johnston** to discuss the tour as well. This meeting will focus on getting to know our host gardens and give the garden sponsors a chance to get to know their host garden.

**I am looking for one more volunteer to be a garden sponsor** for Ruth Doxon's garden. Garden sponsors will "Serve as main point of contact for host garden. Initiate contact with host garden and help homeowner prepare for the tour. Coordinate any needed volunteers for the host garden for planting / weeding etc. Will be at host garden on tour day to aid in set up / clean up and direct volunteers at beginning of shift. Responsible for placement and removal of signage on day of tour. Basically, be a "right hand man" for the host garden!"



extraordinary  
**gardens**  
by ordinary people



**Contact:**  
Chair:  
[Jodie Hand](#)

[Garden Tour Website](#)  
[Facebook Page](#)

## Contact:

Chair:  
[Bob Helvey](#)

Want to be a chair? Your name could be here!

## Nominating Committee

We now have a formal process to nominate and elect officers and two at-large positions for the Steering Committee.

[That document can be viewed here.](#)

This was the first year the process was used, and it was used to great success. We elected folks for all the elected positions to the Steering Committee. Thank you to Rosie Surber, Paul Satre, and Kalsa Parker Browning for their efforts in making the process work. My hat's off to them.

As with many successes like theirs, Rosie and Paul have accepted new positions as Co-Chairs at the Enabling Garden. I don't need to wish them luck in their new position because I know they will be successful. The Enabling Garden is getting two valuable folks.

That leaves the Nomination and Election Committee with a hole in our management team. We only have one chair, me, and to be successful we need more. So, **I'm reaching out via this Green Thumb asking**

for volunteers to join me as a Co-Chair of this committee. The link to the web site will give you information about the committee's activities. If you have questions or want to volunteer, you can reach me at [bob@tsmcgrp.com](mailto:bob@tsmcgrp.com) or 804-357-7956. Thank you in advance for considering this opportunity.



## Continuing Education from Your Home Computer

[Iowa Master Gardener YouTube Channel](#)

\* \* \* \* \*

[Recorded Webcasts from Oregon State University  
Extension \(OSU\)](#)

[Asian Jumping Worms: A Threat of Oregon  
Landscapes](#)  
(this invasive species is also impacting Iowa)

[Are Viruses Lurking in Your Backyard Fruit Trees?](#)

[What can a Leaf Bud tell us about Environmental  
Change?](#)

Master Garden Advanced Education Series are 1 hour each.

[Webinars through eXtension.org](#)

Find educational videos from other Extension Services on [e-Gro.org](#)

## Continuing Education at the Extension Office

Don't have a reliable internet connection at home? The Extension office will be showing Master Gardener Webcasts for those still in need of continuing education (or for folks who just want to learn!)

**Wednesday, Dec. 11th at 2pm** - Local Bees and Organic Vegetables (1hr 45min of continuing education)

## Make sure to record your volunteer and continuing education hours!

In 2018 Polk County Master Gardeners recorded:  
**19,335 volunteer hours**

So far in 2019, we've recorded:  
**13,905 volunteer hours**

If you have unrecorded hours from this year - please get those in! Hours are due by Dec. 31st, 2019.

[Record your hours here](#)



## Pre-Order Your Master Gardener T-Shirt or Sweatshirt

We will be placing an order for Master Gardener t-shirts and sweatshirts before the end of the year. Sizes and styles available are:

Style	Sizes	Price
Crew neck t-shirt	S, M, L, XL, 2XL, 3XL	\$10
Crew neck t-shirt	2XL, 3XL	\$12

V-neck t-shirt	S, M, L, XL	\$12
V-neck t-shirt	2XL, 3XL	\$15
Crew Sweatshirt	S - 3XL	\$22
Full Zip Hooded Sweatshirt	S - 3XL	\$40

All designs are white with full color logo on back and program name on front (see photo above). Fabric is 100% cotton.

[Fill out this form to order.](#)

Order form and payment are due by **Dec. 20th, 2019**. Orders that are left unpaid by this date will be cancelled. Checks can be made to **ISU Polk County Extension** and mailed to our office (please include a note with the name on your order):

1625 Adventureland Dr., Ste. A  
Altoona, IA 50009

We can also accept cash (in office) or card (over the phone, additional 3% processing fee).  
Call Kalsa at 515-957-5768

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## About

Polk County Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources programs aim to help all Iowans, from the home hobbyist to the ag professional, make informed decisions through research-based education. Some programs and focus areas include farm management education, technical expertise for crops, livestock and pests, as well as our Polk County Master Gardener volunteer program; our signature horticulture education program. Our work supports clean water and healthy habitats, profitable farms, and a more secure food system.

## Contact

Kalsa Parker Browning  
Natural Resources Program Coordinator



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