



# The Green Thumb

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



## **You Make a Difference!**

Thank you for donating your time and talents to the Master Gardener Program. Your service helps to support a healthy and thriving Polk Community.

In 2019, Polk County Master Gardeners recorded over  
**19,000 volunteer hours**

Our organization could not have reached as many people without your contribution.  
Thank YOU!

**Thank you for making an impact in 2019**

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## Message from the Steering Committee Chair

Hello Everyone,

Hope you had a restful January.

We are really in need of some folks that are willing to step up and help us coordinate some events related to fundraising. We have a need for help on both the Garden Tour as well as a Pop-up Plant sale. These efforts will be critical to ensure that we have the ability to fund projects in 2021. Please let me know if you are willing to assist with these efforts. [Ccbbark1989@aol.com](mailto:Ccbbark1989@aol.com)

Also, in the fund-raising vein, if you have skills grant writing or would be interested in assisting with grant writing, please reach out to [Marietta Rives](#). If we were able to secure a grant or two, it would significantly help our efforts. Many thanks for your consideration!



Okay, on to the fun stuff... On a snowy Sunday afternoon in January, I was able to catch up with Molly Bonnsetter to find out a little bit more about her and her interests.

**Christine:** How or when did you become interested in gardening. How did you end up connecting into the MG program?

**Molly:** *My husband and I bought a house four years ago and it was a blank slate. There were only a couple of bushes, so we were able to get creative with the landscape (by we I mean me, but he does the heavy lifting). Before our house, I had experimented with container gardening at my apartment. I have been aware of the MG project for a long time, as I have several family members who are Master Gardeners: Mary Rolfes, Therese Rolfes and Kate Rolfes.*

**Christine:** Flowers, Vegetables (or none of the above...)

**Molly:** *Vegetables! That is what I grew in containers at my apartment. Now that we have a yard, I have a big vegetable garden. My favorite is radishes because I love to cook with them (or pickle!)*

**Christine:** What brings a smile to your face in the garden?

**Molly:** *Most of the plants in my yard come from cuttings or splits/transplants from my family. It is really special to look out into my yard and know where and who each plant came from. Now that we have been here for awhile, my plants are getting to the point where I'll be able to share them in the same way that my family did with me. I am also working on an area for native pollinators - I'm calling it my Pollinator Jubilee. It is a very happy place to be!*

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

**Molly:** *Learning something new - whether I am at a class, or when I am volunteering. People have such a variety of knowledge that can be shared.*

**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

- 2020 Garden Tour
  - Garden sponsor
  - Communication team
  - Education committee
  - Activities committee meeting - Feb. 11th
  - Planning session - Feb. 25
- Demonstration Garden (Urbandale):
  - Event Coordinators
  - Co-Chair (Leadership Team)
  - Orchard Management
  - Spring Kick-off Meeting March 23rd
- Discovery Garden (State Fair Grounds):
  - Leadership opportunities
  - Spring Dinner and Planning Meeting - March 25th
- Nominating Committee co-chair positions

### Continuing Education

- **Feb. 4th and 6th:** [Master Gardener Webcasts at the Urbandale Library.](#)
- **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
- [Climate and Our Soil: A Call to Stewardship](#)
- [Pollinator Champion online course](#)

View educational opportunities mentioned in the latest issue of [Growing Connections](#)

## Award Nominations are Open!

Do you know of a Master Gardener who deserves to be honored? Nominate them for a Master Gardener Service Award!

We are introducing some new awards for the Spring Award Celebration on April 2, 2020, at the Extension Office, and are looking for nominations for the following:

**Splashmaker:** is for a relatively new Master Gardener, currently certified, with 2-3 years of service in the Master Gardener program, who has "jumped in with both feet" to make a splash in our organization. This individual may be devoted to one project only or work on any number of Master Gardener projects. This is the Master Gardener "Energizer Bunny".

**Jack of All Trades:** goes to the currently certified Master Gardener who is working behind the scenes and making a significant impact for the PCMG program. This MG is doing tasks that support and promote the efforts of PCMG, but may not be highly visible to a number of other Master Gardeners.

Thinking of someone? [You can nominate them here.](#)

**Deadline for nominations is March 15, 2020.**



## Program Committee

Chair: [Mary Poulter](#)

### February 13, 2020 Education Agenda 2.5 hours of Education

- 5:45 p.m. Potluck begins: bring a side dish for soup if you can
- (We need 2 more volunteers to bring soup.  
Contact [poultermk76@gmail.com](mailto:poultermk76@gmail.com) if you can do this)
- 6:15 p.m. Housekeeping/introduction

- 6:30 p.m. Dr. Thomas Rosberg: *Exploring the Natural History of Iowa's Most Wild and Pristine Places* 2.5 hours education

[Sign up here.](#)

If the weather is poor, look for an email with weather related announcements.

### Upcoming Program Nights:

- 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

Thank you to all who attended the Jan. 9th Program Night. There were 92 present for a full house! Soup volunteers were:

- Sherry Swihart
- Sandie Sydnes
- Jean Caulkins
- Jan Hendrickson
- Mary Poulter
- Linda Brown
- Linda Thompson
- John and Catherine Kaiser

If you'd like to view resources from Tivon Feeley's presentation, [those can be found here.](#)



## Call for Grant Writers

We are currently looking for Master Gardener Volunteers who have an interest in grant writing to help us explore funding opportunities. All experience levels welcome.

Interested? Contact Marietta Rives:

[Mariettarives@hotmail.com](mailto:Mariettarives@hotmail.com)



## 2020 Bus Trips

**SAVE THE DATE for our 2020 bus trips!** We have two fun bus trips planned for 2020. Each trip includes opportunities to

connect with other gardeners, tour fabulous gardens, and shop for plants and accessories at local garden centers.

## Contact

Chair:

[Laurie Barrick](#)



**The one day bus trip will be July 25th.** We will travel to the Cedar Rapids area to visit some beautiful private gardens in-between shopping opportunities at some really nice garden centers.

**We are traveling to the Kansas City area August 29th to the 30th for our overnight trip.** We have found so many gardens to visit in this area - it is going to be a very busy two days of garden overload!

The registration forms with trip details will be coming soon. For now, we hope you will get these dates blocked off on your calendar and plan to join us on the bus tours. We are very excited about all of the stops on these two tours!

Questions? Please contact [Laurie Barrick](#).

## Demonstration Garden

Welcome February! Time for shop lights, grow lights and in some cases heat mats. It is now when the seed starting season often begins in earnest. While the tomatoes, peppers and marigolds may get our attention in March, many plants including the vinca and petunia require a bit more time to develop before moving into the garden in May. Thank you to our Demo garden volunteers that are assisting in our floral and vegetable seed starting this season.

**Demo Event Coordinators:** We are looking for MG's and Interns that appreciate organization and enjoy event coordination. Lessons learned and supply lists from previous events in prior seasons are made available to assist you. Fresh ideas are welcome. The annual Open House will be on July 9th, 2020. If interested, contact Ruth at 515-253-9115.

**Leadership Team (Co-Chair):** Please contact Ruth or Sandie if you have an interest in a leadership position. The Demonstration Garden has many options for matching your skills to various projects, activities and tasks.



Co-chairs:

[Ruth Doxon](#)

(515) 253-9115

[Sandie Sydnes](#)

(515) 276-1497

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



**Orchard Management:** Are you interested in fruit trees? We are looking for a few individuals that will take on management of the orchards at the Demonstration Garden. This would include monitoring the health of existing trees, monitoring the weather for best time to spray dormant horticulture oil in the spring and the Japanese beetle deterrent in the summer season (both approved for organic use). Individuals will work with volunteers to complete spraying and also communicate with the co-chairs on other orchard needs such as sprout removal, thinning apples or timing of harvests.



If you are interested in learning about the volunteer opportunities mentioned or other options available, please contact a co-chair.

Please mark your calendar and join us for our **Spring Kick Off Meeting on Monday, March 23rd at the Urbandale Public Library.** Start time 6:30pm.



## Discovery Garden

A Hidden Gem



We are excited to begin our 2020 planning season with our Spring Dinner and Planning Meeting on Wednesday, March 25<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm at the Scarlet Grill, Grandview Country Club Clubhouse, 2400 E. 29<sup>th</sup> Street in Des Moines. Pizza, onion rings, salad and cookies will be served and the price is approximately \$15 - payable the evening of the event. The Dinner portion of the evening will begin at 6:00 pm and the Meeting portion of the evening will begin at 6:30 pm. If you would rather just come to the meeting - you are most welcome to do so. However, please reserve ahead of time at [discoverygardenpcmg@gmail.com](mailto:discoverygardenpcmg@gmail.com) and place



*Spring Meeting* in the subject line or call Jean Roe @ 515-279-8706. Please also distinguish if you are coming to the Dinner and Meeting or just the Meeting ~ thank you. It is important you reserve ahead of time and respect the reservation process. Make sure to log your MG volunteer hours for your attendance and your travel time to and from this meeting. All are welcome!

**Thursday, August 13  
through Sunday, August  
23, 2020 - 2020  
Iowa State Fair**

As of this writing, we will be hosting 14 new DG Team Members this spring. We are so pleased to have them join our Discovery Garden! We will introduce

these new members at our Spring Dinner and Planning Meeting.

**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.](#)



Additionally, we would like to welcome Brenda Peshak as a new member of our DG Communications Team. Brenda joins the DG Communication Team Members: Jen Firzlaff, Cathie Law, Paul and Gloria Morris and Mark Riggs. Brenda loves volunteering for several different organizations. She enjoys growing vegetables in her garden and is excited to redo her front flower garden this spring. Brenda lives with her husband Scott and daughter Fiona in West Des Moines. She is excited to learn new things from all the Master Gardeners. Brenda is taking over the position held by MG Nancy Bodine who is stepping back from her DG Communications Team role after 10 years; however, you will still see Nancy at our MG gardens and events! **Thank you Nancy and welcome Brenda!**

**DG Co-Chair Leadership:** 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.

**Upcoming Dates:**  
**Spring Dinner and Planning Meeting - Wednesday,**  
**March 25, 2020**

## **Polk County Master Gardeners**

### **Garden Tour**

**June 20, 2020 9am-4pm**

**featuring gardens in Urbandale and Clive**

Planning for this year's PCMG Garden tour is in full swing. We will highlight our own Urbandale Demonstration Garden (Urbandale's best kept secret) as well as several home gardens in the Urbandale/Clive area. Adult and Children's activities, plus Master Gardener demonstrations and MG education will be at every garden the day of the tour. In keeping with tradition, this is going to be an exciting and vibrant tour.



### **Volunteer opportunities.**

**Host Garden sponsor:** Your chance to help a fellow Master Gardener prepare their garden for the tour. If you envision your own garden being showcased in a PCMG future tour, this is a great opportunity to learn the ropes. If you want to work in a team, we welcome teams of two or three to sponsor one Host 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. Basically, be a "right hand person" for the host garden!"

**Communications Team Member:** We need your skills in social media, website, selling ads for brochure, public media presentations. If this an area of interest for you, we have a place for you on our team.

**Education Committee chairperson:** We need someone to chair ( or serve ) on a committee to plan education and demonstrations that will be on the tour.

### **Upcoming Events ---New people always welcome:**

**Tuesday February 11,2020- 6 pm: Activities committee planning meeting. Pat Martin home- 6980 NW Beaver Drive, Johnston.** Anyone interested to help plan education offerings and activities please come to the meeting and bring your ideas! We will be deciding the final activities for each garden. We Promise a fun evening -- For further information contact Kathy Cole : [kshell2012@yahoo.com](mailto:kshell2012@yahoo.com) Phone: 515-468-0766

**Tuesday February 25, 2020- 6:15 pm -- Full Garden Tour planning session . Clive Public Library,** All committees and interested individuals ( including new people) are encouraged to attend. We will review the progress of the garden tour and discuss planning going forward. For further information or to volunteer contact

### **Contact:**

Co-Chairs:  
[Jean Samson](#)  
515-669-3054

[Kathy Cole](#)  
515-468-0766

**A huge thank you to  
Jean and Kathy for  
taking on new roles  
as co-chairs for the  
Garden Tour!**

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

Jean Samson: [jean.samson75@gmail.com](mailto:jean.samson75@gmail.com) phone 515-669-3054.

**Contact:**

Chair:

[Bob Helvey](#)

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

## Nominating Committee

We are looking for people to serve on the Nomination and Election Committee. [Find more information about the committee's activities here](#). If you have questions or want to volunteer, contact Bob at [bob@tsmcgrp.com](mailto:bob@tsmcgrp.com) or 804-357-7956.

Thank you in advance for considering this opportunity!

## You're Invited!

CyBiz Lab will be giving the final presentation of their Greenhouse Feasibility Assessment on Feb. 6th, at 6pm.

If you are interested in attending, [please RSVP here](#).

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### Please Note:

Kalsa will be out of the office Feb. 17-28th, and will try to accommodate requests outside of this timeframe.

Thank you!

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### About

Polk County Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources programs aim to help all lowans, 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  
ISU Extension and Outreach, Polk County  
(515) 957-5768  
[kparker@iastate.edu](mailto:kparker@iastate.edu)



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