Greetings Gardeners!

If you're a recent graduate of the Master Gardener classes, some of this may be redundant for you. Nancy Eichmann has done an excellent job of introducing trainees to our program. Recently, I've received questions from some veteran Master Gardeners about the program so thought it would be appropriate, as a refresher, to make this the topic of my article for January.

The purpose of the Iowa Master Gardener program is to provide current, research-based, consumer horticulture information and education to the citizens of Iowa through Iowa State University Extension and Outreach programs and projects.

The Master Gardener program is an educational and volunteer service organization of the Iowa State University (ISU) College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and ISU Extension and Outreach. Through the Iowa Master Gardener program, interested volunteers receive training in horticulture and environmental topics of special value to home gardeners.

In exchange for this training, Master Gardeners share their time and knowledge on approved projects within their communities. Through the leadership, instruction, and hands-on assistance provided by Master Gardeners, the broad resources of Iowa State University are extended to benefit Iowans at the local level and enhance the quality of life in Iowa communities.

Iowa State University Extension and Outreach is a partnership among campus-based ISU specialists and staff located in Ames, the United States Department of Agriculture, and local Extension districts. This partnership
cooperates with local governments and citizens to extend information from the research done at the university to citizens throughout Iowa.

The Iowa Master Gardener program was first offered in Davenport, in Scott County in 1979 with a class of 17 trainees. More than 14,000 Iowans representing nearly all of Iowa's 99 counties have been trained as Master Gardeners since the inception of the program. In a typical year, training is offered in approximately 30 locations around the state, and between 300 and 400 new trainees participate in the program.

All of this information, and more, is in a document titled MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEER MANUAL. You can access the entire document here.

Polk County Master Gardener Steering Committee Meets in January

- Thursday, January 17th
- Polk County Extension Office
- 6:00 PM
- No reservation is required to attend
- If schools are closed for weather, we are also likely to cancel.

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January Profile of a PCMG : Judi Pierick

Judi's introduction to gardening was in a Dubuque elementary school.

A teacher gave the entire class a "Punch and Grow" for tomatoes. It was a small tray of vermiculite with tomato seeds and a plastic cover with holes to punch out for watering. She later discovered their insulation was vermiculite based and she taught herself how to grow Marigolds.

It wasn't until the 1970's that she became a serious gardener when she moved into her current house. She had a variety of plants and deer. That changed her gardening direction to house plants and container gardening. She grows the typical combination of container plants for her deck, but she also grows tropical milkweed and tropical hibiscus which she over-winters. Judi has a few perennials (knock out roses, Asiatic lilies, columbine, hosta) in an area deer leave alone.

Her current volunteer time is focused on the Program Committee, working the Discovery Garden during the fair, and now on the Steering Committee where she is the Master Gardener +5 Years representative.

What she likes most about being a Master Gardener is meeting other people who like gardening as well and giving back to the community. In addition to being a Master Gardener volunteer, she is also part of the Iowa AARP Executive Council.

If there is someone you think should be profiled in the Green Thumb, reach out to me at bob@tsmcgrp.com or 515-224-6424 and tell me about that
Greenhouse

The Greenhouse really would appreciate your help with watering in the upcoming season.

Watering teams are scheduled for 9:00 a.m. on:

- **Mondays & Fridays -- February through April** and
- **Tuesdays, Thursdays & Sundays--March through April.**
- Teams are by day of the week--but you can volunteer to be part of more than one team.

Each day has a team captain who will open the greenhouse, turn on the water and answer any question that you might have.

If you can volunteer to join any of the teams, please contact Sharon Beninato: sbeninato54@msn.com or (515) 249-3975.

Teams can also vary by month so if you only have time during one month, please consider adding watering to your schedule.

Visual of Watering Team Schedules-- **Contact Sharon Beninato to volunteer**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Month</th>
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Education Time during 2019 Intern Learning Labs in January

The greenhouse labs will be held at our Greenhouse, 9401 NW 70th, Johnston. The dates are:

- **Saturday, January 19th**
- **Wednesday, January 23rd**
- **Saturday, January 26th, 2019**

**We will start promptly at 9:00 am so aim to arrive at the greenhouse around 8:45.** We will be focusing on watering, soils, sowing seeds and transplanting seedlings. This training qualifies as education for current Master Gardeners--but space is limited to ensure everyone can see and hear. Master Gardeners, please contact Cheryl Fridl to be added to a training date.

Interns--contact Cheryl if you need to change dates--otherwise, watch for an email from her as your training date approaches.
Contact person to sign-up is Co-Chair Cheryl Fridl at cheryl.fridl@gmail.com.

As always, wear your name tag and dress in layers and be prepared to have fun!

Greenhouse weather policy: If the local schools are closed, the greenhouse is closed. If it is a weekend please use your best judgement. Your safety is our priority.

Greenhouse Co-chairs:
Cheryl Fridl - cheryl.fridl@gmail.com
Kent Freise - kentfreise@gmail.com
Jean Schustek - jean.schustek@gmail.com

Program Committee

Sign Up ASAP:
Tivon Feeley: Native Trees for Iowa Landscapes, Soils & Trees
(AND new PESTS!)

2.5 education hours on Tuesday, January 8
Come for supper & stay for the program!

- Potluck begins at 5:45 pm
- Program begings at 6:20 pm
- Speaker: 6:30 to 9:00 pm

Volunteers needed to bring soup for Program Nights
Contact Mary Poulter at poultermk76@gmail.com if you can bring a crockpot of soup to share.

Click here to reserve your space at the January 8th meeting!

Save the dates:
- **Thursday, Feb 28**: Dr. Rosburg, Drake "Tallgrass prairies & threats to those native plants"
- **Thursday, March 28**: Jordan Scheibel, Middle Way Farm 'Five Lessons for Growing Organic Vegetables"
- **April**: TBD

Jump-start your 2019 Education Hours!

- Jan-Mar: 2.5 hours of CEC
- Apr: 1 hour CEC plus--see what's new for the Plant Sale & our 2019 projects!
- Attend all four & get 8.5 hours of CEC!
Plant Sale

The Plant Sale is never far from our minds regardless of the time of year but we are now starting very early prep for the May sale.

Seeds have been received, very early seeds have been sowed at home and the coleus mother plants are being prepped for cuttings. We have even started receiving hard scape donations so keep us in mind as you start to clean house for the new year!

We will start more planning once the greenhouse opens in February and are looking for help with all aspects of the sale so if you want to be a bigger part of planning the sale, want to get started early on your hours without necessarily being confined to the Wednesday and Saturday greenhouse hours, have good organizing or other specialized skills that could in running the sale and ideally a flexible schedule then please e-mail Jen at jen.firzlaff@icloud.com.

Greenhouse Co-chairs:

Jen Firzlaff: jen.firzlaff@icloud.com
Isabella Hurless-Banks: imhurless@aol.com
Polk County Master Gardener

T-shirt or Sweatshirt?

Pre-ordered Shirts available for Pick-up after January 18th

If you ordered and paid for a shirt/sweatshirt, they will be available after January 18th. *Interns who ordered a shirt can pick theirs up at the Greenhouse on their lab day. Graduation certificates can also be picked up on your Greenhouse Lab day.*

Master Gardeners who ordered shirts can pick them up at the Polk County Extension office, Monday - Friday between 8:00 and 5:00* or before Program Nights in Feb - April.

*Prefer to pick-up your shirt at the Greenhouse?* Contact Ike by January 15th to make that request.

*The Polk County Extension Office will be closed on Martian Luther King Day (Monday, January 21st).*

If you ordered a new name badge it will be mailed to your home.

Nominating Committee

First draft of a Steering Committee (SC) nomination and election process was review by the SC at the November meeting and decided some changes were needed. Those changes are being incorporated into the procedures for review at the January SC meeting on Thursday, January 17th. Anyone can attend the meetings which begin at 6:00 pm at the Polk County Extension Office.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nominating Committee Co-chairs:</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rosie Surber: <a href="mailto:rms50112@gmail.com">rms50112@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob Helvey: <a href="mailto:bob@tsmcgrp.com">bob@tsmcgrp.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Demonstration Garden

Happy 2019! We have another year behind us and one to look forward to. Take time to enjoy winter whether it be soaking in the beauty of snow, the grass plumes standing in the sun, or simply relaxing with a garden catalog. The winter bones of a garden can be beautiful.

The Demonstration Garden gets an early start to the season with our annual pruning of the fruit orchard and other trees and shrubs. Watch for future communications for dates and times in late February and early March that will be open to our general PCMG population.

We looking forward to working with you during the 2019 season.

Visit our website and Like our Current Facebook page:

http://www.demonstrationgardenpcmg.org/
https://www.facebook.com/demonstrationgarden/

Demo Garden Co-Chairs:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Email</th>
<th>Phone</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ruth Doxon</td>
<td><a href="mailto:rdoxon@gmail.com">rdoxon@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>(515) 253-9115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sandie Sydnes</td>
<td><a href="mailto:sasydnes@gmail.com">sasydnes@gmail.com</a></td>
<td>(515) 276-1497</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Discovery Garden

Discovery Garden put to rest at the end of a great season. Photo courtesy: Dean Brand

Happy New Year!
We look forward to seeing you all this spring!

Save the Date:
Thursday, August 8 through Sunday, August 18, 2019 - 2019 Iowa State Fair

Co-Chairs:
Dean Brand  drbrand@mediacombb.net  tel: 515-360-0774
Earl Hinnekamp  19earl53@gmail.com  tel: 515.443.0010
Jean Roe  ljroq@q.com  tel:515.205.8706
Patrick Schmitt  schmittpatrickj@gmail.com  tel:515.279.9645

Like us on Facebook:  https://www.facebook.com/groups/discoverygarden/
View our website:  www.discoverygardenpcmg.org

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Enabling Garden
Happy New Year! Hope you had a joyous time with family and friends over the holidays. The last part of 2018 has felt a bit like spring; the mild temperatures have my cool season grasses growing!

Here are a few dates for you to mark on your calendars through May 2019:

- April 13 - Perennial Plant sale
- April 14 - Perennial Plant sale (inclement weather date)
- April 27 - 1:00 PM - Spring Clean-up
- May 4 - 1:00 PM - Spring Clean up
- May 7 - 4:00 PM - First work night of the 2019 Season
- May 19 - 1:00 PM - Appreciation Potluck
- May 28 - Season of Learning kick-off - 7PM in the garden

Watch the Green Thumb or the "This and That" for a planning meeting to be scheduled.

Please connect with us on our website . . .

www.enablinggardenpcmg.org

. . . or keep up to date on current pictures, upcoming activities, or potential changes due to weather on our Facebook Group

Enabling Garden Co-Chairs:
  Sandie Hamilton - bhamil7132@aol.com
  Paula Winslow - peaceinthegarden@aol.com
  Christine Barker - ccbark1989@aol.com
  Sharon Schoonoer - schoony35@aol.com

Garden Tour 2019

It's time to plan this year's tour!

If you are interested in helping to plan this year's tour please contact Jodie Hand by e-mail for more information. We will have a Spring meeting sometime in February or March. Stay tuned for details!

Our target area for the 2019 Tour will be Ankeny and Bondurant, with a tentative date of Saturday June 29th, 2019. If you are an active Master Gardener or Intern or will be in Spring 2019 and live in Ankeny or Bondurant and would like to be featured on the tour please let Jody know. We will be
selecting gardens for the tour this Fall and will continue to make our tour selections this Spring. **If you have any questions about being a host garden please contact Jodie by e-mail.**

Thank you!

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### Garden Tour Co-chairs:

Jodie Hand (Primary) - jodie.mariehand@gmail.com

Eric Hand (Secondary) - eric.hand@caseys.com

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### 2019 Bus Tours

**SAVE THE DATES!**

Mark your calendars for the PCMG bus trips in 2019! We're still putting the final plans together for both trips, so here are just a few highlights. **Registration information will be available later this month.**

**Saturday, May 25** is a one-day excursion in the Central Iowa area featuring 5 private gardens and a few other fun stops.

- Meet a father and son who specialize in hybridizing iris and see both of their gardens
- View as much of an 8 acre property as time allows
- Sniff peonies galore
- Visit plants you may have seen on our trip to Madison, Wisconsin a few years ago at Ed Lyons' garden. Ed moved many of his plants to Ames when he joined the staff at Reiman Gardens.

**Saturday and Sunday, June 22 and 23,** is a one-night overnight trip to the Dubuque, Iowa area. We'll join the Dubuque County MG garden tour (which includes 6 private gardens), along with stops at the Dubuque Arboretum, a large butterfly garden, and (of course) some plant nurseries.
Chair:
Laurie Barrick: barrick8792@msn.com  tel: 515-278-8792

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January
Our office will be closed on Martin Luther King Day:

Monday, January 21, 2019

Phone: 515-957-5761
email: nancyike@iastate.edu

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IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
Extension and Outreach

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

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Update Profile | About our service provider
Sent by nancyike@iastate.edu in collaboration with

Constant Contact
Try it free today