Green Thumb
The Newsletter for the Polk County Master Gardeners
June 2015
ISU Extension and Outreach - Polk County
1625 Adventureland Drive, Ste A, Altoona, Iowa 50009
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Matt's Missive

Now that the days are visibly longer and the soil has warmed, you've probably been busy working the garden, either at home and/or at one of the PCMG display gardens. We've recently begun to catch up on our rainfall needs, and the extended weather forecast calls for a cooler-than-normal summer, which should bode well for our flower beds, if not our vegetable gardens.

If you are like me, the end of most days finds you dirty, overly-tired or both-and always with a slightly sore back. There's truth to the saying that a garden needs lots of water, with most of it in the form of perspiration! When I start to wonder whether gardening labors are worth it, I remind myself of the quote from the organic gardening pioneer, Robert Rodale: "In almost every garden, the land is made better, and so is the gardener." I think Rodale was right--there is value to garden work. Environmental psychologists tell us that spending time outdoors in the garden reduces stress, lowers blood pressure and relieves muscle tension. In addition, according to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, gardening qualifies as "moderate cardiovascular exercise." According to some studies, 45 minutes of gardening can burn as many calories as 30 minutes of heart-healthy aerobics. I'll drink to that!

Aside from the health benefits, there's undeniable mental satisfaction in seeing well-tended plants move through cycles of bloom and dormancy like clockwork each season. For example, the peonies and irises were magnificent over the past two weeks, and perhaps for a week or so more, but we won't see them again until next May. Perennials are kind of like old friends who stop by for a regular visit-and they don't overstay their welcome.

But there's no denying that hard work is necessary for a successful garden, as illustrated by the story of the preacher and the gardener. According to the tale, an avid gardener purchased an old, run-down, abandoned rural homestead with plans to turn it into a gardening showplace. The yard and beds were grown over with weeds, the trees needed pruning, and the fences were broken down. During the gardener's first day of work, the town preacher stopped by to bless her efforts, saying, "May you and God work together to make this the garden of your dreams!" A few months later, the preacher stopped by again to call on the gardener. Lo and behold, the old homestead was a completely different place. The lawns were lush, the trees neatly trimmed, and the flower beds were bursting with blooms. The fences had been repaired and painted, and the carefully pruned fruit trees were now heavy with fruit. The vegetable garden was overflowing with produce of every conceivable variety. "Amazing!" the preacher said. "Look what God and you have accomplished together!" "If you say so, reverend," the gardener replied, "but just remember, this place didn't look anything like this when God was working it alone!"

May God bless all of your gardening work this season.
Matthew Dore, Steering Committee Chair, matt.dore@drake.edu
Art Show

Be part of the fourth annual Master Gardener's Art Show. New this year, the show is open to all Iowa Master Gardeners. The exhibition will be held at the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden, beginning with a reception on Monday, August 31, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Applications are being accepted now through August 1, 2015. Entries must have a horticultural, floriculture, or gardening theme and must have been completed within the last 3 years. In addition to Best of Category designation, selected art work will be exhibited at the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden's North Gallery from September 1 through November 16. Free standing art pieces may be entered in the Art Show, but it is not possible to display free standing objects in the North Gallery; these entries will be represented in a photo collage. Selections for art to be hung in the gallery will be based on Botanical Garden criteria for exhibits and selection will be part of the judging process.

Awards will be presented at the Art Show Reception open to the public, friends, and family at the Botanical Garden's Swartz and Walsh rooms on Monday, August 31, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

If not selected to hang in the North Gallery, art needs to be picked up August 31, 7:30 p.m. at the Botanical Garden. If selected to be hung in the North Gallery, art needs to be picked up on November 17.

Categories - Drawing, Painting, Photography, Mixed Media, Fiber/Leather/Basketry, Ceramic, Metal, Glass, and Repurposed for Garden Art. If an individual artist wishes to apply in more than one category, a separate application will need to be submitted for each piece of art work. Up to 3 entries can be made per category. Mail completed application(s) to Pat Reeves by August 1, 2015. Questions - contact Pat at patriciareeves2@gmail.com

Please check out the categories and enter the Art Show. The application is at this link. Please bring your friends and family to the Art Show Reception. Some pieces will be for sale.

Chair: Patricia Reeves patriciareeves2@gmail.com

Bus Trips

Thank you to everyone who joined us on the one day trip to northeast Iowa. We had a good day and confirmed once again that gardeners are just fun people to travel with!

We are finalizing details for the St. Louis trip which takes place August 7th to the 9th. We will be asking Mary Farlow to post the registration form to the Polk Count Master Gardener website within the next week or two. The highlight of this trip will be a visit to the Missouri Botanical Garden.

Chair: Laurie Barrick barrick8792@msn.com

EAB is close - so you may need to know

Extension publication PM 2084 has been revised with current EAB information. Now that most of Polk county is within 15 miles of a known infestation of Emerald Ash Borer, Ike Eichmann has edited a guide for finding an Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship Certified Pesticide Applicator. Click here to find the instructions.
Demonstration Garden

We had great weather for planting our beds these last few weeks, then several days of gentle rain. It doesn't get any better than this for gardens, does it? We're also happy to report that the food pantry garden fence has been installed, gates and all. Special thanks to Tony Christensen, Michael Boes, Michael Fuson, Bruce Travis and everyone else who had a hand in this project. The fence looks fabulous, but more importantly, there will be more vegetables to harvest for the Urbandale food pantry this year now that the critters won't be snacking on the veggies.

Another new sight in the demo garden this spring is the metal sculpture in Roundabout. If you look closely, you might notice that the spiraling rods look suspiciously like spray-painted tomato stakes that have been drafted into service as art.

Work nights are Mondays beginning around 5:30, and same time on Thursdays until education classes begin in June. And speaking of classes, the first installment in our "How Does Your Garden Grow?" series will be held on Thursday, June 11, at 7:00 p.m. Elvin McDonald will be speaking on "Roses, Roses, Roses." We hope you can join us!

Co-chairs in training:  
**Diane Ackerman** fridafolks@aol.com  
**Ruth Doxon** rdoxon@gmail.com  
**Susan Travis** eagles.wind@gmail.com

From Past Chair, Margaret Spikes (aka The Warden)

It was quite a surprised to be honored at the Spring Planning Committee meeting in March for the Demonstration Garden. I was not expecting such a nice thank you from the Master Gardeners for my past 13 years leading the Demonstration Garden. Please accept my gratitude for your gifts. I plan to use my gift certificate for a Japanese Maple as the deer made a quick meal of my 2-year-old tree. It is one of my favorites and I was quite disappointed to lose it. I am also already using my garden gloves (you can never have enough gloves!) and my compact pruner. I have never owned a soil knife, but have envied others who have praised theirs as their best gardening tool. The best part was the book of thank you cards and notes. Gardeners are the most creative and generous people I know! Thank you for your recognition, and I am looking forward to continuing hanging out with the passionate gardeners who keep teaching me about gardening, dedication and friendship!
The Discovery Garden has been planted and is growing, in spite of the damp cool weather. We had our first educational event on the 29th, Pollination Celebration, with 43 people attending. The other events will be on July 1st, 8th, and 15th. There will NOT be a work night on the June 3rd due to the Pork Expo being held at the fairground.

Sign up for fair shifts will begin July 1st, contact Jean Roe ljroe@q.com, or 279-8705.

Enjoy June, it is a beautiful month.

Co-Chairs: Dean Brand drbrand@mediacombb.net ph.: 515-360-0774
Jean Roe ljroe@q.com ph.:515-205-8706
Patrick Schmitt schmittpatrickj@gmail.com ph.: 515-279-9645
Cheree Tilton tiltoncm@gmail.com ph: 515-262-0488

Farmers' Market

June 20 will mark our second of five appearances at the Des Moines Downtown Farmers' Market. We're stationed at the corner of Court Avenue and Third Street on the third Saturday of each month, answering questions from market-goers on all sorts of gardening topics. The shifts are from 6:45 to 9:30 am, and 9:30 to 12:15. Volunteers are welcome to take a break and stroll around, and it's an easy and fun way to earn your volunteer hours.

We choose a few feature topics each month. In May, we spoke to about 230 people, focusing on planning and planting vegetable gardens and flower beds. As always, we also lured passers-by to our booth with offers of free seeds and dog treats! June is the start of the season for one of nature's most beautiful flowers- the rose, and roses will be one of our selected topics. We'll also feature water gardens. We're always looking for volunteers, and if a volunteer has a favorite gardening topic he or she would like us to highlight, we would be happy to oblige.

If you'd like to work at the farmers' market booth in June or later in the season, please contact Sherri Soich.

Co-Chairs:
Matt Dore  matt.dore@drake.edu 274-3292, Sherri Soich sherrisoich@gmail.com 710-5665, Randy Campbell campbellrd@mchsi.com 265-7074
Enabling Garden

Our Season of Learning continues this month with our special guest, PCMG Roger Erpelding, who will be speaking about Lessons Learned from My Mother’s Garden. Roger brings his enthusiasm for gardening and life in general to the Enabling Garden. Grab a lawn chair and join us in the garden at 7:00PM on Tuesday, June 23rd for his entertaining discussion.

If you haven't been out to the garden for a while, stop out and see the progression of our Children's Garden on the south side of the EG. Several of the elements have now been installed. Thank you to all of the volunteers that have been working on this important project for fund raising, coordinating and installing. There is still much to be done, but it is moving along nicely.

Once again, the Enabling Garden will be the site for Altoona's Wine and Craft Beer Fest, sponsored by the Altoona Area Chamber of Commerce and the Altoona Hy-Vee on Saturday, June 19th between 5:00 - 8:00PM. Get your tickets today for this awesome event! Tickets are $15 in advance and $25 at "the door" and can be purchased at Altoona Hy-Vee and several other fine Altoona Retailers. The cost of admission gets you an evening of wine & beer samples, gourmet cheeses, fruits and crudités, and entertainment. See the link below for more information!

Altoona's Wine and Craft Beer Fest

For the second year, we are proud to feature Yoga in the Garden provided by Blue Lotus Yoga on select Saturdays during the summer months. Please join us on the following Saturdays: June 20th, July 18th, and August 29th for all-levels yoga. Grab your yoga mat, a bottle of water and friend to get your weekend started with stretching, strengthening and relaxation. The class is free, but we would like participants to bring a non-perishable food item as a donation to the Caring Hands Outreach Center. Last but not least, regular work nights at the Enabling Garden are underway on Tuesdays. Plan to join us on any Tuesday late afternoon starting 5:00PM, weather permitting. Please join us for fun, food and fellowship in the garden.

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

Greenhouse

If you work for a nursery or in the nursery department of a store, and have any supplies, including seeds, that will be discarded, please keep us in mind. We will take any donation, pots under 4", and will be glad to provide a receipt for the donation. Contact Alda Helvey, Bob Helvey, Cheryl Fridl or Jean Schustek if your company has a donation and we'll make arrangements to get them. Thank you in advance.

If you are returning flats or pots to the greenhouse, make sure they're not broken. Please just throw away broken pots and flats. Also, we can't use any pots over 4".

Co-Chairs: Alda & Bob Helvey 515-224-6424 bob@tsmcgrp.com
Garden Tour

Garden Tour is June 20!
9 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Rain or Shine

Volunteer Opportunities:
Lots of help is needed to hang the remaining Garden Tour posters. Please email Mary Brown Mehalovich MBrown@BSBDesign.com or Troy Peters shumakerlevy@yahoo.com to help out.

As of June 1, all tour-day volunteer positions have been filled. If you would still like to volunteer for tour day, email Kathy Winter kwinter32@mchsi.com to be placed on the waiting list.

Tickets are $15 each and available at:
Earl May Garden Centers (all Polk County locations plus Waukee)
Goode Greenhouses
The Woodsmith Store Garden Center

Garden Talk
On tour day at 2:30 p.m. at Garden #6, Marcia Leeper will give a talk about "Beyond Hosta... Bright Ideas for Shady Areas"

Raffle Items
Once again Vikki Vencil (friend of Margaret Spikes) donated a wonderful quilt. This year's quilt has a Christmas orchard theme.

We also have a second raffle item. 6 winners will be drawn to each take home 4 bottles of Bobbex... a all-natural deer and rabbit repellent.
Raffle tickets are $1 each or 6 for $5. You may drop your tickets in either the "quilt" bucket or the "Bobbex" bucket, or split your tickets between the two for chances to win both prizes. Tickets on sale at the volunteer training tour or on tour day at Garden #3.

Garden Previews

Garden #1 - Agape Garden
This one-acre vegetable garden and fruit tree orchard was started in 2003 by a small group of volunteers. It has evolved into an ecumenical ministry with support from several local churches and organizations. Together we produce and donate fresh vegetables to local area feeding programs.
Located next to Agape Garden is our prayer labyrinth with mixes of Karl Foerester, Cheyenne Skies, Russian Sage, and catmint plantings.
Garden #2 - Don Glassman
A surprising bit of wilderness tucked into a suburban cul de sac, this yard features several gardens carved out of a wooded ravine: bearded irises, sedum, daylilies, hostas, clematis, roses, spring bulbs, astilbes and other perennials, several varieties of climbing hops, many containers of vegetables and annuals, and a hillside prairie grasses and wildflower planting all anchored by a pond-less waterfall, a shaded pergola, and a rustic stairway to the prairie and a colorful apiary.

Garden #3 - Ken & Shirley Sailer
We have a little bit of everything in our garden located in the oldest part of Ankeny. Behind our A-frame home is the most prominent feature of our garden: a 2,700 gallon pond with a waterfall and lots of goldfish. Accenting our perennial beds are pieces of handcrafted stained glass art. Don't miss the stained-glass stepping stones that create a path through the shade garden. Most of the perennials were established 40 years ago. The rest of our garden beds are filled with colorful annuals grown from seed.

Garden #4 - Julie Christian
Long hidden behind a line of cedar trees is a quaint, quirky 1935 cedar bungalow, Juniper Lane Cottage, that sits on part of an aging oak savannah near Saylorville Lake. Surrounding this charming 'storybook' setting are rambling roses, peonies, daylilies, lilacs, yuccas and iris all in their original spots since they were planted in the 1940's. The original plantings have provided an anchor and inspiration for ever-expanding perennial beds. A plethora of hardscaping materials form winding paths throughout the property, taking you in and out of the planted areas. You will see a working garden shed, welcoming arbor, two small fountains, multiple seating areas, and fire pit. Many repurposed items will be found throughout the grounds, including pallets as fencing, well covers as a stairway and concrete fence post bases as supports for birdbaths and planters. It is a Certified Wildlife Preserve by the National Wildlife Federation. All manner of critters are welcome here--deer, rabbits, raccoon, skunks, opossum, mink, bats and birds of every kind. Barred owls nest across the ravine and a ground hog lives under the garden shed.

Garden #5 - Eric & Jodie Hand
We have spent the last four years transforming our yard into a garden retreat with a potager-style raised bed kitchen garden, several fruit trees, a raspberry and asparagus patch and a beautiful deck with raised beds surrounding it. We are always adding something new and making improvements to make the outside of our home as much of a retreat as the inside of our home is. We enjoy sharing the bounty of our garden and have become quite adept at preserving our harvest by freezing and canning. I am very proud to have started all of my vegetables and annual flowers from seed this year. Each year the garden changes as we rotate crops and try new varieties. We believe a vegetable garden can be functional and beautiful at the same time, as evidenced by the myriad of flowers planted amongst our vegetable crops.

Garden #6 - Jim & Kathy Winter
Seventeen years ago we started with a blank slate and plants donated by family. A variety of plants and garden art tell stories. The original hostas came from Kathy’s family home. The sedum from her grandmother's back yard. The spiderwort from Jim's family home. The rose bed along the east side of the house was started by roses given to us by my family on our first anniversary (17 years ago). The garden art is eclectic and many pieces are souvenirs from vacation adventures. The huge head, named Geneva, came from a nursery on Long Island and 2 other members of the family have one as well. The pipe organ came from the church we were married in. The dancing iron couple came back with us from Sedona. The oak hydrangea was given by a friend who moved away from the area. Nothing fancy, but lots of memories and stories to tell when we gather with friends.

Michelle Walke, Garden Tour Chair
Plant Sale 2015

We asked for your help and you gave it!

AND

Our 2015 Plant Sale was our most successful sale ever!

And much of its success was due to the overwhelming support we received from so many of our fellow Master Gardeners. There are so many people who deserve thanks. The Greenhouse crew for managing the greenhouses and all of the volunteers who gave their time on Wednesday and Saturday mornings. The Farmers Market Group who set up their stand at Saturdays sale and spread the word about what a great program we have and the many wonderful things we are involved in. The Master Gardeners who helped set up the sale and those who worked shifts at the sale as well as all of those who heard our call and made so many wonderful donations including our beautiful silent auction item.

The plants grown by the Greenhouse this year were truly awesome and the plant donations were the largest and most varied we have ever had.

We learned a lot this year and are already looking forward to preliminary planning for the 2016 sale. We are always open to suggestions as to how we might improve and what we might consider to increase revenue in coming years.

Again, the Plant Sale Committee wishes to say a great big thank you to everyone who played a part, no matter how large or small, in the SMASHING success of PLANT SALE 2015!

Plant Sale co-chairs Jen Jenkins, Isabella Hurless-Banks, and Joy Trueblood

Education Opportunities

Click to print and share Summer Events
The classes at each of the gardens are listed by date.

ISU Summer Webinars

Polk County Extension and Outreach Office in Altoona will host these webinars from 6:30 to 8:30 pm on: Wednesday June 10, Design from Yard to Trough, Tuesday July 14, Water in the Garden, and Thursday August 27, Pollinators & Growing Herbs
Cost per session is $5.00 for Master Gardener households or $10.00 for non-MG households. Please pre-register by email to mfarlow@iastate.edu

Click to print and share Summer Webinar details

Not sure if it would be actual MG education but an ISU activity that would be fun for the whole family. Reiman Gardens has eight individually themed interactive houses on display thru October. For details, see http://www.inside.iastate.edu/article/2015/04/23/reiman

Forrest Avenue Outreach is sponsoring a series of talks this summer. Here is the list.
Community Requests

The Grubb YMCA is looking to fill some of their elementary summer programming. If you can help, contact Glennda Bivens at 515-520-4338 or glennda@iastate.edu

Dates: June 8 - July 17th

King Elementary  Tuesday 1-3 grade STEM 2-3:30 Nutrition  Thurs 12:30 - 1:30
Monroe Elementary 1-3 grade STEM Wednesday 2-3:30 Nutrition Ed Mon 12:30-1:30

Gardening Monday 1:30-3:30

McKinley Elementary 1-3 Stem Monday or Thurs 2-3:30 Nutrition Education Friday 1230 - 130

Gardening Fridays 1:30-3:30 (possibly filled)

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Interested in volunteering with Des Moines Public Schools' garden programs? An increasing number of schools are planning and implementing garden projects that engage students and communities. There are opportunities to help plan, plant, harvest and interact with students, teachers, and/or the community. Contact Lyn Jenkins, Nutrition Education Specialist lyn.jenkins@dmschools.org to discuss locations and opportunities that will work for you.

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LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS AT POLLINATOR FEST
Saturday, June 20th from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Visit Reiman Gardens, Ames, IA and celebrate National Pollinator Week. There will be many collaborators present to make sure this day is educational and also plenty of fun! Collaborators include: the Iowa State University Pollinator Working Group, the ISU Insect Zoo, the ISU Entomology Graduate Student Organization, and the ISU Graduates in Evolutionary Biology and Ecology. More - http://www.reimangardens.com/event/pollinator-fest/

Pollinator gardens continue to develop much interest in Iowa and provide an opportunity for creativity, skill, and care of plantings.

By volunteering for this event, Master Gardeners' can share their perspectives on how to approach pollinator gardening, gain new appreciation for conservation sites/recent plantings in Iowa, and much more... Some examples of pollinator conservation sites and rainscaping are attached to this email and were kindly provided by the Polk Soil & Water Conservation District and IDALS Urban Conservation Program. We are very much interested in having someone from Master Gardeners participate.

Please contact either Mark Lohafer (Mark.Lohafer@iowaagriculture.gov) or Gretchen Paluch (Gretchen.Paluch@iowaagriculture.gov) at Iowa Department of Agriculture & Land Stewardship to volunteer. If interested in attending the event and workshops, visit the Reiman Gardens website page above.
Please check

The next time you log in to the ISU MG Hours Reporting site, please review your existing reports. If the report is verified, please note any changes I may have made before verifying. (Category either "Set up and/or assist with community gardens" or "Other activities not listed". Location will be the project name only.) That would be the way I need to see it for reports for each of the projects. Please submit new reports in the same way.

I'm very pleased to see that we have already reported almost 8,000 volunteer hours for the year. Keep up the good work of reporting in a timely manner instead of waiting until you've completed your volunteering and education for the year.

Iowa State University
Extension and Outreach

Extension programs are available to all without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, or disability.