

# The Green Thumb

*Monthly Newsletter for Polk County Master Gardeners  
& Master Gardener Interns*

**Iowa State University Extension & Outreach--Polk County**  
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Altoona, Iowa  
Phone 515-957-5761



## Greetings Gardeners!

**Cabin fever is in full force.** Today I received a Facebook page with a basket of Tulips and the message Hello Spring - 28 days. Another Facebook post was "I googled my symptoms. Turned out I just need to go camping." My sister-in-law sent me a Facebook post with a picture of a cat up to its chin trudging through snow. The comment was: "When I find that damn groundhog, I'm going to kick his butt." Last week a Master Gardener posted a picture of her back yard with the post: "I know there's a garden out there." This week, a Master Gardener posted on Facebook a picture of several snow mounds where flowers had been applied with spray paint.

If you're suffering from cabin fever, don't forget about:

- **Wednesday and Saturday work days at the Greenhouse.** Just show up 9:00 AM until Noon or whenever the work is done. Reach out to Sharon Beninato (sbeninato54@msb.com or 515-249-3975) and volunteer for one of the watering teams.
- **Monthly program at the Extension Office. (3/28/19)**
- **Learn on Saturday** at the Greater Des Moines Botanical Garden.
- Ike puts all the garden classes she knows about in the Green Thumb so keep your eye out for that. If you know of a garden class somewhere,

reach out to Ike or Kalsa so they know about it. Their contact info is in the Green Thumb.

January's Steering Committee meeting was the first on Thursday and attracted more people than I've ever seen at the meeting. Don't know if it was the date change, meeting content, cabin fever or something else, but thanks to all who attended, and I will see you in March. If anybody else wants to attend **Steering Committee in March, it's on Thursday, March 14.**

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## January Profile of a PCMG : Sherry Swihart



Sherry grew up on a farm in NC Iowa where she helped her family grow vegetables that could be canned and frozen for winter food. They also had lots of flowers and house plants.

Studying social work at Iowa State so she could become a Social Worker at a mental institute, she took two horticulture elective classes. One of them was taught by THE Dr. Buck of rose fame. How many of us have had that honor?

Until she moved to Des Moines about 10 years ago, she didn't have a lot of garden space, so she concentrated on house plants. Now she has space outside and can grow vegetables and flowers.

Sherry took the class in 2014 and jumped right in. One of her first volunteer jobs was as April Captain at the Greenhouse. That can be difficult because there is so much variety of activities for the Volunteers. She had seeding, transplanting, watering, inventory, and basically keeping the Greenhouse running. Under her guidance it ran very smoothly, and she loved that project. She was also on the Program Committee for several years.

Now she concentrates on the veggies at the Demo Garden and working with trainees during their class (she taught English for several years). In addition, she has taught transplanting to 4-H members, and a worm class to preschoolers. The difficulty here is making sure they don't eat the worms.

She loves the people she's met at PCMG. Thinks it's lots of fun, and looks forward to the opportunities to learn.

**If there is someone you think should be profiled in the Green Thumb, reach out to me at [bob@tsmcgrp.com](mailto:bob@tsmcgrp.com) or 515-224-6424 and tell me about that person.**

**Bob Helvey**  
**Steering Committee Chair**  
[Bob@tsmcgrp.com](mailto:Bob@tsmcgrp.com)

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## Greenhouse

The Greenhouse is open! Work days are **Wednesdays and Saturdays** until the Plant Sale. The **doors are open at 9:00 am** on both days. We stay until the work is done - generally by noon.

**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.

Follow our Facebook page for the latest updates on the Greenhouse: <https://www.facebook.com/pcmggreenhouse/timeline>



**Greenhouse Co-chairs:**

Cheryl Fridl - [cheryl.fridl@gmail.com](mailto:cheryl.fridl@gmail.com)  
 Kent Freise - [kentfreise@gmail.com](mailto:kentfreise@gmail.com)  
 Jean Schustek - [jean.schustek@gmail.com](mailto:jean.schustek@gmail.com)



**Education Hours  
at the Public Libraries!**

**Winter Master Gardener Webcast & Special CEC Video**

**At the **Urbandale Library:****

*register by calling: 278-3945*

These are Free, Open to the Public, and about 1 hour each.

You may bring your own lunch or snack to enjoy!

Dates	Topic	Start Time
Wednesday March 6	Limited Space Gardening	1:00
Wednesday, March 6	Symphony of the Soil	2:15

**At the **South Side Library****

Free, open to the Public, about 1 hour.

(This is the same video as March 6th.)

Date	Topic	Start Time
Saturday, April 13	Symphony of the Soil	10:15



## Continuing Education from Your Home Computer

### Iowa Master Gardener YouTube Channel

[CLICK HERE to link to the page](#)

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### LIVE Webcast from Oregon State University Extension (OSU)

Master Garden Advanced Education Series are 1 hour each.

Register to watch live from your home: [click here](#)

*Note they are usually recorded & they can be viewed later from their website--see link below to their YouTube channel.*

Dates	Topic	Start Time
Friday, March 15	Demystifying Grafted Tomatoes	1:00 PM

Link to **Recorded** OSU Master Gardener Advanced Education Series (prior years)

[CLICK HERE](#)

## Program Committee

### Education Events Offered March - April at the Extension Office

Just a reminder, you need 10 hours of education a year to maintain your certification. Here are some upcoming opportunities to socialize & get some hours of your education in place before the work season begins. Evening events are a potluck that will start at 5:45 p.m. with the program 6:15 p.m.

- **Thursday, March 28:** Jordan Scheibel, Grinnell organic farmer will share details about organic processes that replace many of the chemicals that other commercial farmers use. He will also discuss the requirements of selling produce that is certified as organically grown. **2.5 hours of education.**
- **Thursday, April 11:** Dr. Mathew Bailey, Climate-mindful Home Gardening Practices (and fun and inspirational presentation!) **1 hour of education.**

Volunteers are need to bring soup. Please contact Mary Poulter ([poultermk76@gmail.com](mailto:poultermk76@gmail.com)) if you can donate. You can earn one hour of volunteer time for soup prep.

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER FOR MARCH](#)



Program Committee Chair: Mary Poulter: [poultermk76@gmail.com](mailto:poultermk76@gmail.com)

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## Plant Sale

**Mark your 2019 Calendars for May 3, 4, & 5!**

Well it is a brand new, albeit very cold and snowy, year and we once again have the use of the greenhouses on 70th Street in Johnston. Last year was our first in this location and it turned out to be our most successful sale ever. Our hope for 2019 is to continue that success and to build on it. We know that it is still early days but ask that you please start thinking about what you can contribute to the sale. Your donations are pure profit so don't be shy about also asking friends, neighbors and relatives to contribute.

**Here are some of our wants and needs for the sale:**

### IMMEDIATE NEEDS

- **Greenhouse** - Still needs **4" pots**
- **Plant Sale** - Still needs **light colored mini blinds** to make Plant Markers (Plastic only at this point as metal can cause cuts)
- **Cardboard Flats** - I have a standing order at my Fareway at 86th and Meredith for berry boxes. Fareway is very good about doing this so if there is a store near you, you might try asking them to save them for you

### NON PERISHABLE DONATIONS

If you have "hardscape" donations such as garden art, garden furniture, pots ect. you can bring them to the greenhouse any **Wednesday or Saturday morning**. The greenhouse is open from 9:00 a.m. until work for the day is finished, which is generally no later than noon. We would love to get these types of donations as early as possible as it will help us get the ready ahead of the game and make sale time a little less hectic. if you have a particularly

large donation or need assistance getting your donation to the greenhouse please contact Isabella.

### **VOLUNTEERS FOR THE SALE**

We will have online volunteer sign up available in the next few weeks and we will let everyone know as soon as it is ready. There will be opportunities to sign up to help out with setting up the sale, as well as working both the main sale and our post sale. These are all great opportunities to fulfill your hours, meet other Master Gardeners and have fun helping our customers.

If you have any questions please contact a co-chair.

*PLEASE NOTE THAT JEN'S EMAIL CHANGED A FEW MONTHS AGO . . . .*



### **Plant Sale Co-chairs:**

Jen Firzlaff: [jen.firzlaff@icloud.com](mailto:jen.firzlaff@icloud.com)

Isabella Hurless-Banks: [imhurless@aol.com](mailto:imhurless@aol.com)

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## **Garden Tour 2019**


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

**Garden Tour date is Saturday June 29th, 2019**

Locations in **Bondurant & Ankeny**

We are looking for any master gardeners in Ankeny and Bondurant that would like to have their home featured on the tour. **Please contact Eric or Jodie by e-mail if interested!**

**Thank you!**

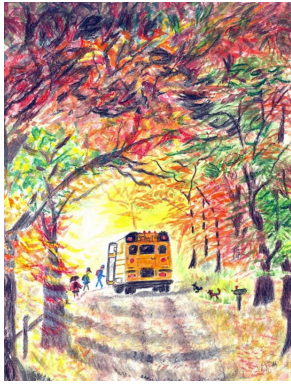
 <p>extraordinary <b>gardens</b> by ordinary people</p>	<h3><b>Garden Tour Co-chairs:</b></h3> <p><b>Jodie Hand (Primary) -</b> <a href="mailto:jodiemariehand@gmail.com">jodiemariehand@gmail.com</a></p> <p><b>Eric Hand (Secondary)</b> <a href="mailto:eric.hand@caseys.com">eric.hand@caseys.com</a></p>
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## **2019 Bus Trips**



## Register Now for the One-day Trip



Central Iowa Trip on

**Saturday, May 25th**

Bus will be Departing from Urbandale

**REGISTER NOW** for our one-day trip on Saturday, May 25!

[The registration form can be found on the Polk County Master Gardener website.](#)

Please join us for 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
- One of the stops on our trip to Madison, Wisconsin a few years ago was to Ed Lyons home garden. We will visit Ed's current home in Ames. (He is now on staff at Reiman Gardens.)
- More details can be found on the registration form on the PCMG website.

**SAVE THE DATE: Saturday & Sunday, June 22 - 23**

**Our overnight trip is to the Dubuque (Iowa) area** (one night only). We'll join the Dubuque County Master Gardeners' Garden Tour (6 private gardens), visit Dubuque Arboretum, a visit with author of That Tree and a stop to see the tree featured in the book. AND(of course) we'll stop at some plant nurseries.

### Chair:

Laurie Barrick: [barrick8792@msn.com](mailto:barrick8792@msn.com) tel: 515-278-8792

Charlene Butz: [cnb819@aol.com](mailto:cnb819@aol.com) tel: 515-202-5178

## Art in the Garden

PCMG Art in the Garden will return **Saturday, Aug. 3, 2019, from 9-3 at PCMG Demonstration Garden in Urbandale.**

This family-friendly event is co-sponsored by Urbandale Community Education. Food, music, learning opportunities (eligible for continuing education certification), free children's activities, and over twenty garden-themed art vendors will be available.

Opportunities for Master Gardeners will include volunteering in a number of roles, all of which are eligible for volunteer service hours, opportunities for continuing education hours, and a make and take projects. Vendors of

photography, hand painted cards, jewelry, decorative yard art, iron sculptures, soaps, art glass, and pottery will be represented.

Art in the Garden profits all serve to support Polk County Master Gardener projects. Gardeners, families and volunteers can enjoy live entertainment, learn gardening skills, participate in hands-on activities, buy fun garden-themed art, and socialize with other Master Gardeners.

**Please mark your calendars now. Volunteer signup will be open about 6 weeks before the event, and will be publicized through the Green Thumb.**



**Art in the Garden Co-chair:**  
Katherine Howsare: [howsarek@live.com](mailto:howsarek@live.com)



## Demonstration Garden

Fresh snow can be exceptionally beautiful, however this year winter fatigue is setting in. Many of you may be longing for that first crocus or snowdrop. The below normal temperatures and depth of snow have resulted in a **delay of the pruning labs. New dates will be announced once they are scheduled.**

In the meantime, think spring and **join us for our 2019 kick off meeting on April 1st.** The meeting will be held at the Urbandale Public Library, start time 6:30pm. This meeting includes a review of projects and events planned for the year in addition to outlining our areas of greatest need and beds needing attention.

April brings our annual spring clean up. **Join us on Saturday morning, April 20th.** Start time 9 am or whenever you can arrive.

**We look forward to seeing you in the garden this year.**

Visit our website and *Like*  
our Current Facebook page:

<http://www.demonstrationgardenpcmg.org/>

<https://www.facebook.com/demonstrationgarden/>



**Demo Garden Co-Chairs:**

<b>Ruth Doxon</b>	<a href="mailto:rdoxon@gmail.com">rdoxon@gmail.com</a>	<b>(515) 253-9115</b>
<b>Sandie Sydnes</b>	<a href="mailto:sasydnes@gmail.com">sasydnes@gmail.com</a>	<b>(515) 276-1497</b>

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## Discovery Garden

A Hidden Gem

**"If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant."**

~ Anne Bradstreet

Doesn't that quote have you just longing for spring? We have endured a bitter winter this year and look forward to getting on with our planning for another successful year at the Discovery Garden. Our Spring Dinner and Planning Meeting is scheduled for March, however, we do not have an exact date at this time. As soon as we have the date secured, we will inform you.

**The Discovery Garden currently has some openings on garden bed teams for 2019.** In case anyone is interested, you may contact any Co-Chair for further information. We look forward to some new faces with new ideas for the Discovery Garden.

Here is a sneak peak of what we have scheduled for our Summer Discovery Garden Educational Sessions.

**Sessions begin at 6:00 pm after our Wednesday Work Night. Meet us at the John Deere Pavilion** located just south of the John Deere Agricultural Building at the Iowa State Fairgrounds.

- **Wednesday, May 29th:** Care and Placement of Ornamental Grasses in the Home Landscape, presented by Polk County Master Gardener and Co-Chair of the Discovery Garden, Earl Hinnenkamp.
- **Wednesday, June 12th:** Topic still to be determined presented by Patti Peterson-Keys, Environmental Education Coordinator with Polk County Conservation.
- **Wednesday, July 10th:** Designing with Native Plants, presented by Meredith Nunnikhoven with Barn Swallow Flowers ( Oskaloosa, Iowa).
- **Wednesday, July 17th:** Unusual Trees and Shrubs for Iowa Landscapes, presented by Barry Laws, Operator of Quilted Gardens & Nursery (Des Moines, Iowa).



Photo credit: Dean Brand

## 2019 Iowa State Fair

Thursday, August 8 - Sunday, August 18

### Co-Chairs:

Dean Brand [drbrand@mediacombb.net](mailto:drbrand@mediacombb.net) tel: 515-360-0774

Earl Hinnekamp [19earl53@gmail.com](mailto:19earl53@gmail.com) tel: 515.443.0010

Jean Roe [ljroe@q.com](mailto:ljroe@q.com) tel:515.205.8706

Patrick Schmitt [schmittpatrickj@gmail.com](mailto:schmittpatrickj@gmail.com) tel:515.279.9645

Like us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/discoverygarden/>

View our website: [www.discoverygardenpcmg.org](http://www.discoverygardenpcmg.org)



## Enabling Garden

We have a reschedule of our planning meeting on **Tuesday, March 19th at the Polk County Extension Office at 5:00 PM (social); 5:30 PM Dinner** (provided by the Co-chairs) and meeting start. Please join us to discuss our spring perennial sale as well as starting planning for productive 2019 season! As mentioned in last month's Green Thumb, please note these the following Spring dates:

- April 13 (Saturday) - Enabling Garden perennial plant sale. (Rain date: April 14)
- April 27 & May 4 (Saturdays) - 1:00 PM Spring Clean-up
- May 7 (Tuesday) - 4:00 PM First work night at the Garden
- May 19 (Sunday) - 1:00 PM Appreciation Potluck at the Garden
- May 28 (Tuesday) - 6:30 PM Speaker Barry Law
- June 1 (Saturday) - 1:00 Saturday in the Garden

**Thanks and see everyone soon!**

**Please connect with us on our website . . .**

[www.enablinggardenpcmg.org](http://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](mailto:bhamil7132@aol.com)

Paula Winslow - [peaceinthegarden@aol.com](mailto:peaceinthegarden@aol.com)

Christine Barker - [ccbark1989@aol.com](mailto:ccbark1989@aol.com)

Sharon Schoonoer - [schoony35@aol.com](mailto:schoony35@aol.com)



## March Office Hours

I have several events outside of the office during March.  
*Most* weeks this month you catch me in the office:

Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays--9:00 to 4:00  
Wednesdays 9:00 to 1:00

**Phone: 515-957-5761**

**email: [nancyike@iastate.edu](mailto:nancyike@iastate.edu)**

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