



# The Green Thumb

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



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

Hello All -

This month on Thursday, 3/19/2020, we will have an **open** Steering Committee, where the details of the CyBiz feasibility study will be discussed. This will be a strategy work session to come to an agreement on how best to implement and

deploy the recommendations. It will be interactive, where we will be brainstorming ideas on sticky notes and then voting on the collection of ideas.

Any active Master Gardener, Intern or Trainee is invited to attend.



For our spotlight interview this month, I had the privilege to chat with Koti Battu.

**Christine:** How or when did you become interested in Gardening? And, what led you to the MG program?

**Koti:** *My wife and I bought a house in Johnston that had a large lot. Previously, we didn't have much land to garden. I decided we would try to grow Indian vegetables such as okra, several types of eggplant, bitter gourds and different types of leafy vegetables. I got some of my plant material from garden centers, but some seeds had to be ordered online from specialty seed sources.*

*I started gardening around 2009 and was going it alone for the most part. Then, in the summer of 2011, I attended the Iowa State Fair, where I walked into the Discovery Garden. It was there, that I found out about the Master Gardener program. I enrolled in the program and became an MG between 2012/2013.*

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

**Koti:** *While I enjoy everything in my yard from fruit trees, perennials, shrubs, and annuals... I have to say my choice is vegetables.*

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

**Koti:** *When my wife and 11-year old son are out in the yard picking fruit from the trees and bushes.*

**Christine:** What do you want MG and others to take away from the Master Gardener Program?

**Koti:** *The Master Gardener program is a sharing culture. It is place where people can exchange material and ideas about different gardening practices, learn about new topics and get access to research-based information. It is a program that will keep you learning.*

**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 Tour - Full Committee Meeting
    - 3/31: Urbandale Library 6-8 p.m.
    - 4/28: Clive Library 6-8 p.m.
    - 5/26: Urbandale Library 6-8 p.m.
  - Dunlap Gardens help
  - Activities sup-committee meeting - March 24th
- Demonstration Garden (Urbandale):
  - Co-Chair (Leadership Team)
  - Spring Kick-off Meeting March 23rd
  - Spring clean up - April 18
- Discovery Garden (State Fair Grounds):
  - Spring Dinner and Planning Meeting - March 25th
- Enabling Garden:
  - March 24 (Tuesday) 5:30PM - Extension Office
  - April 18 (Saturday) noon - 3:00PM - Enabling Garden Perennial Plant Sale

### Continuing 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, Container Gardening
- **March 18, 25, April 1 - [Master Gardener Webcasts](#)** at the Forest Ave. Library
- [Pollinator Champion online course](#)
- Enabling Garden:
  - May 19 (Tuesday) - 6:30PM Speaker Mamta Israni to present on "Mother Nature's Medicines"

View educational opportunities mentioned in the latest issue of [Growing Connections](#) (watch for the next issue in mid-March)

- o April 25 and May 5 (Saturdays) - 1:00PM Spring Clean-up
- o May 12th (Tuesday) - 4:00PM First work night at the Garden

## 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](#)

## Thursday, March 12, 2020 Education Agenda 2.5 hours of Education

5:45 p.m. Potluck begins: bring a side dish for soup if you can

6:15 p.m. Housekeeping/introduction

6:30 p.m. Aaron Steil: Gardening Under Lights

### PCMG Program Sign-up 03/12/20

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

### **Future education opportunity:**

-Thursday, April 2: Spring Celebration: Awards and one hour of education by Marcia Leeper, Container Gardening

Thank you to all who attended. There were 62 present to hear Dr. Rosburg. Soup volunteers were:

- Rosie Surber - Beef stew
- Jean Bean - Tortellini soup
- Linda Peppers - 6 can chili
- Diana Sosalla - chicken and wild rice

Thank you for bringing the soup!

If you'd like to view resources from Dr. Rosberg's presentation, those can be found here:

[Loess hills](#)

[Wetlands - fens](#)

[Paleozoic plateau](#)

[Sand praries](#)



## 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

Recently one of our winter sowing volunteers (Brenda Peshak) stated "Just wishing for spring! Figure sowing seeds gets me closer right?" This remark came about as part of the distribution of Demo's seed and sowing schedules. Even when early seed starting and transplanting is in a basement under shop lights or spare window with bright sunshine it does give the illusion of the impending spring weather. Transplants of the earliest selections are looking pretty good. Thank you to Angie, Brenda, Molly, and Jerry who are assisting us in this endeavor.

Late winter is the time to be pruning most trees and shrubs. March 7th and 11th the newest interns will be joining an arborist at the Demonstration Garden to learn new skills and put their knowledge to practice. We have a couple spots open for continuing education hours for current MGs - [sign up here if interested](#).

Please join us for the Demonstration Garden Spring Kick off meeting. **It is being held on Monday, March 23rd at the Urbandale Public Library. Start time 6:30pm.** We will discuss 2020 plans and volunteer opportunities during the season.

Mark your calendar and join us for our Spring Clean Up. Start time is 9am on **Saturday, April 18th**.

If you are interested in learning about the volunteer opportunities available and you are not receiving the Demonstration Garden's email messages, please contact a Co-Chair.

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

You're invited,

Discovery Garden will be hosting their Spring Planning Dinner Meeting on 3/25 at the [Bright Grandview Golf Course](#) Club House, with dinner starting at 6:00, meeting at 6:30. Dinner will include pizza, salad, and desert. Price is approximately \$15 - payable the evening of the event.



Reservations are being accepted via email: [Discoverygardenpcmg@gmail.com](mailto:Discoverygardenpcmg@gmail.com) (please put Spring Meeting - Dinner RSVP in the subject line) or by contacting Jean Roe at 515-205-8706. Please be respectful and mindful of the reservation process for dinner and respond by 3/20/2020.



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. Make sure to log your MG volunteer hours for your attendance including your travel time to and from this meeting. All are welcome!

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

Please join us as we share our upcoming season initiatives along with welcoming many of the new team members to the Discovery Garden this year. Anyone interested in joining the Discovery Garden team is also welcome.

### Contact:

Co-chairs:

[Dean Brand](#)  
(515) 360-0774  
[Joyce Carle](#)  
(515) 229-6769  
[Jean Roe](#)  
(515) 205-8706  
[Patrick Schmitt](#)  
(515) 657-1937

### Upcoming Dates:

- Spring Dinner and Planning Meeting - Wednesday, March 25, 2020
- Thursday, August 13 through Sunday, August 23, 2020 - 2020 Iowa State Fair

Take care all.

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

## Enabling Garden

As has become our tradition, the Enabling Garden will have its **Spring plant sale from 12 Noon - 3:00PM on Saturday, April 18<sup>th</sup> 2020**. Location: 1050 1<sup>st</sup> Ave S, Altoona, IA (SE of the Hy-Vee loading dock). We will have a wide variety of perennial plants and ornamental grasses available for sale, including: Sedum, Fountain Grass, Siberian Iris, Little Blue Stem Grass, Day Lilies, Prairie Drop Seed Grass, Karl Foerster Grass, Liatris, Nepeta, Coreopsis, Amsonia, Japanese Wax Bells, Miscanthus Grass, Queen of the Prairie and a whole lot more!! Proceeds go to the Enabling Garden for the purchase of maintenance supplies and equipment for the garden.

You can find out more by checking out the Enabling Garden Facebook page.

We have scheduled a planning meeting for Tuesday, March 24th at the Polk County Extension Office at 5:00 PM (social); 5:30PM Dinner (provided by the co-chairs) and meeting start. Please join us to discuss planning for productive 2020 season!

### **Please mark your calendar for these important 2020 Spring dates:**

- March 24 (Tuesday) 5:30PM - Extension Office
- April 18 (Saturday) noon - 3:00PM - Enabling Garden Perennial Plant Sale
- April 25 and May 5 (Saturdays) - 1:00PM Spring Clean-up
- May 12th (Tuesday) - 4:00PM First work night at the Garden
- May 19 (Tuesday) - 6:30PM Speaker Mamta Israni to present on "Mother Nature's Medicines"

Hope to see everyone soon!



Co-chairs:  
[Rosie Surber](#)  
[Judy Goshorn](#)  
[Paul Satre](#)  
[Christine Barker](#)

Visit our [website](#) and connect with us on our [Facebook Group](#).



## Polk County Master Gardeners

# Garden Tour

June 20, 2020 9am-4pm

featuring gardens in Urbandale, Clive and West Des Moines



extraordinary  
**gardens**  
by ordinary people

**Website: Please visit our updated website at [PCMGGARDENTOUR.com](http://PCMGGARDENTOUR.com).**

We extend a HUGE thank you to the multi-talented Brenda Peshak for our exciting new website. Brenda is an intern who brought skill, passion and energy to our entire communications team. We are so proud of the finished product.

**About Garden Tour:** 2020 Master Gardeners will host 7 home gardens and 2 public gardens in Urbandale, Clive and West Des Moines. Each home garden has at least one fellow Master Gardener, also known as sponsor, who assists the host gardener with garden preparation and with hosting on the day of the tour. This year's hosts and sponsors are:

- Kent Friese - West Des Moines- Nan Tibbets, Sponsor
- Kathy Cole - Clive - Jeralee Justice and Susie Folkerts, Sponsors
- Ruth Doxon - Urbandale - Linda Brown and Jeannette Kahrl, Sponsors
- Charity McCauley Andeweg - Urbandale - Karen Tandy, Sponsor
- Diane Ackerman - Urbandale - Paul Satre, Sponsor
- Nancy Anderson - Urbandale - Gayle Brenneman, Sponsor
- Judy Hines -Urbandale - Marcia Daly, Sponsor
- Demonstration Garden - Urbandale - Mary Gannon, Sponsor
- Dunlap Garden - Urbandale -Cathie Law, host; Paul Satre and Lori Blake, Sponsors

**Advertising Sales** Our advertising sales team, Liz Breuer and Therese Rolfes, are actively pursuing garden-related companies and other businesses to purchase ads in our Garden Tour Brochure. This brochure is published in the Spring and handed out at the Tour. Thank you to Jessica Sievert for the graphic design of the Garden Tour publications, including the Tour brochure. If you have suggestions for sales leads, send information to [pcmgtour@gmail.com](mailto:pcmgtour@gmail.com)

**Ticket Sales:** Tickets will be available in the Spring (April 1) both on-line and at select retail garden centers. Jan Jensen

## Contact:

Co-Chairs:

[Jean Samson](#)  
515-669-3054

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

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

is ticket sales coordinator for the Tour. Tickets are \$10.00 per adult; children 12 and under are free. More to come on ticket sales.

**Volunteer Opportunities:** We are looking for volunteers to help Cathie Law prepare the Dunlap Garden perennial bed and volunteers to help prepare the Demonstration Garden beds in mid Spring and prior to the Tour. We will have many more volunteer opportunities in the Spring to help prepare the gardens for the Tour and to host activities at the sites, to work on communications and publicity events, and to host at all the sites on the day of the Tour. Stacy Long will be coordinating volunteers. There will be a sign up on-line. Please email us at [pcmgmtour@gmail.com](mailto:pcmgmtour@gmail.com) if you want to sign up for current opportunities, help with the two public gardens, need hours and/or wish to be notified of spring sign up.

**Activities/Education Committee:** Activities Committee meeting March 24th, 2020 at Kathy Cole's home, 12949 Lincoln Ave., Clive. Contact info: [kshell2012@yahoo.com](mailto:kshell2012@yahoo.com) 515-468-0766. We will be deciding where we are going to have each of the activities, as well as prepping parts of activity that require work. Activity Teammates and any others interested in helping with activities, should bring scissors, and single hole punches if they have them.

#### **UPCOMING DATES:**

##### **Garden Tour - Full Committee Meeting**

- **3/31:** Urbandale Library 6-8 p.m.- General committee meeting
- **4/28:** Clive Library 6-8 p.m. - General Committee meeting
- **5/26:** Urbandale Library 6-8 p.m.- General Committee meeting

**Contact:**  
[Kalsa Parker](#)  
[Browning](#)

## **2020 Earth Day Tour**

Polk County Master Gardeners will be representing at the 2020 Earth Day Tour at the Greater Des Moines Botanical Gardens!

The Earth Day Tour is a collaboration between the Botanical Garden and the Science Center of Iowa, and is targeted primarily toward children and families. The goal of the Earth Day Tour is to promote environmental awareness and highlight different community organizations.

Volunteers will represent PCMG and engage attendees in a gardening related activity at the event table.

If you are interested in volunteering for a shift: [sign up here!](#)

**Contact:**  
[Kalsa Parker](#)  
[Browning](#)

## **Wellness and Independence through Nutrition (WIN)**

Wellness and Independence through Nutrition (WIN) works to reduce hunger in underserved mid-life and older lowans (age 50 years and older) who are eligible for, but not yet enrolled in the food assistance program.

Human Sciences specialists in select areas reach out to various populations to promote awareness of how food assistance can improve nutrition and quality of life for adults age 50+.

Master Gardeners can get involved by educating seniors about growing vegetables in containers, and about how to utilize them after harvest! Interested volunteers will work with our Nutrition Specialist, Mary Krisco. If you would like more information, or are interested in educating seniors through the WIN program, please reach out to Kalsa at [kparker@iastate.edu](mailto:kparker@iastate.edu).

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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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