

WAPELLO COUNTY MASTER GARDENER NEWSLETTER
February 2021

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
Extension and Outreach

Wapello County Extension Office, 13011 120th Ave., Ottumwa, IA 52501
Phone: 641-682-5491

MEETING PLANS

February is our usual meeting month, but since since we are still in the middle of rampant Covid cases, we should continue to avoid in-person meeting for now and “play it by ear” for the next couple of months.

MEETING MINUTES

No meeting in January.

TREASURER’S REPORT

Balance: \$1151.94

UPCOMING EVENTS

There are currently no “in-person” gardening-related events; however there are lots of webinars and podcasts on line from various state extension offices (many on You Tube).

EDUCATIONAL FEATURE

Miscellany

Having watched marathon webinars to obtain my Master Gardener education hours, I noted some interesting information and resources:

There are twelve species of oaks native to Iowa—6 red oak species (Red oak, Pin oak, Black oak, Northern pin oak, Shingle oak, and Blackjack oak), and 6 white oak species (White oak, Bur oak, Chinkapin oak, Dwarf chinkapin, Swamp white oak, and Post oak).

Buttonbush (*cephalanthus occidentalis*) is a native shrub that pollinators like (it likes moist soil)

Website naturalresources.extension.iastate.edu (select “forestry”)—info on tree ID, invasive species, native species, etc. (lots of tree-related topics)

Website iowadnr.gov (select “conservation” tab, select “forestry” then click on green “sick tree” help box) to access “sick tree resources

Potato beetle: NO easy solution (per Donald Lewis at ISU). Try Kaolin Clay (repellent). Diatomaceous Earth is not effective outdoors since it must be dry to work.

If you use the Plant & Insect Diagnostic Clinic (PIDC) at ISU take many and good pictures to send to them via email.

Plant Pathology (diagnosing plant and tree problems): Look for “signs” and “symptoms”. SIGNS would be the “culprit”, such as a fungal mass, a canker, galls, bugs/worms (many are microscopic). SYMPTOMS would be the “look” such as yellowing leaves, dropping leaves, any changes on the plant.

Rosemary—to keep rosemary alive when overwintering inside you need to add humidity. Place on a tray of gravel and add water to the tray.

Invasives to watch out for: Japanese knotweed and jumping earthworms. Jumping earthworms can be transported in plants, mulch, soil or bait. FYI no earthworms are native to northern US.

Why You Should Rotate Your Vegetable Crops

Many disease organisms are soil-borne and may persist in the soil for several years. Disease problems often increase when the same crop is planted in the same area in successive years. Annually rotating your vegetables in the garden can help reduce the severity of diseases. Rotation may also help curb insect infestations. Insect populations and plant damage may increase when the same crop is planted in the same area over several years.

Vegetable crops in the same botanical family are often susceptible to the same diseases and insects. For crop rotation to be effective, gardeners should not plant vegetables belonging to the same plant family in the same location for two or three years. However, home gardeners should rotate their vegetable crops as best they can.

To assist crop rotation efforts, the following list places the commonly grown vegetables in their proper botanical families. Onions and garlic are members of the *Alliaceae* or Onion family. The *Apiaceae* or Carrot family includes carrots and parsnips. Cabbage, broccoli, cauliflower, Brussel sprouts, kale and collards are members of the *Brassicaceae* or Mustard family. The *Cucurbitaceae* or Gourd family includes cucumber, muskmelon, watermelon, squash, pumpkin and gourd. Garden peas and snap beans are in the *Fabaceae* or Pea family. Members of the *Solanaceae* or Nightshade family include tomato, pepper, eggplant and potato.

(from ISU Extension Horticulture & Home Pest News)

MUSINGS OF THE MONTH

As I am finishing up the newsletter, we are in the throes of a severe winter storm warning with predictions of 8-12 inches of snow. It seems like we just keep getting it all piled on as the previous snowfall had not completely disappeared. I am ready for all the snow to be gone, to get the Covid vaccine (although who knows when that will be) and to finally get to “socialize” with people again! Stay safe!

Carol Geib, Newsletter Editor
cgeib47@gmail.com 641-777-9503