Coordinator’s Comments

I had the distinct pleasure of attending the International Master Gardener Conference, held in the greater Cincinnati area in June. More than 900 Master Gardeners and coordinators from all over the United States and Canada attended the conference. Illinois boasted 41 attendees from at least 17 counties! The next conference will be held in July 2005 in Saskatchewan, Canada, with side trips to the Canadian Rockies and the Prince Albert National Forest. The newcomers to the conference will be the Master Gardeners trained at 4 colleges/university sites in Britain this year. Yes, Master Gardening has spread to a new continent!

Congratulations to Cook South Suburban Master Gardener, Diana Husband who was elected to be a member of the International Master Gardener Conference Committee. Diana will be helping the committee locate sites for future conferences.

Here’s a few of my highlights of the conference:

Awards- The National Search for Excellence Awards had 33 outstanding entries. Although, Illinois didn’t have any winning projects, three counties submitted entries. These included: Kane Counties’ Continuing Education Program for Experienced Master Gardeners; Monroe Counties’ Tomato Variety Test Plots; and Peoria, Tazewell and Woodford Counties’ “In the Garden” Radio Program.

And the winners were….

Community Service Category- Garden Calendar- West Virginia

Demo Garden- Included 7 theme gardens and a website- New Jersey

General Accomplishment- Kids Garden- Pennsylvania

Innovative Programming- a 132 page Home Gardening Guide- Virginia

Special Audiences- Reminiscence in Bloom for the Elderly- New York

Workshop- Ecoscaping & Greening the Community- Maryland

Youth- “DIG N IT” Nutrition & Gardening- Arkansas

Classes- Keynote speaker, Holly Shimizu, Director of the United States Botanic Garden in Washington, D.C., gave an interesting talk on the history of the Botanic Garden. Interestingly, all volunteers at the Botanic Garden are certified Master Gardeners. Holly mentioned that following the tragedy of 9-11, the museums in Washington were all empty but the National Botanic Garden had capacity crowds every day. Holly’s course notes as well as notes from most other sessions will be loaded on the IMGC website in a few weeks. http://mastergardener.osu.edu/imgc2003/

A second very interesting seminar I attended was a presentation on the Ornamental Germplasm Center in Columbus, Ohio. This is only one of 2 sites in the world that store germplasm from ornamentals (the other being a repository in Beltsville, Maryland). The centers’ goals are to conserve, distribute and assess herbaceous ornamental plant germplasm and develop new techniques for conserving seed. They have invited Master Gardeners nation-wide to assist their mission by contributing heirloom cultivars, participating in conservation measures and by sharing their knowledge through participation in technical working groups. Refer to this website for more information: http://hcs.osu.edu/opgc.

On a local note, if you want to attend some really great educational sessions closer to home and network with other Master Gardeners, plan to attend our state conference in Lisle on Sept. 18-20. Information and registration materials are found in this newsletter. Please join us to celebrate “A Gardener for all Seasons”.

Monica David
Historic Landscape and Garden Sites Workshops

Campbell Center for Historic Preservation Studies, in Mt. Carroll, Illinois, is offering three, one-day workshops designed for Master Gardeners working on Historic Garden and Landscape projects. In keeping with the Campbell Center mission, all courses will be practical in nature and will include both slide/lecture and walking tours of the campus and surrounding areas. The campus, which was established in 1854, includes a wide variety of trees including the oldest American Chestnut tree in Illinois. Within a short walking distance from the campus, historic Mt. Carroll offers a wonderful mix of late 19th century and early 20th century homes, many which still reflect the original homebuilder’s ideas of landscape design.

The courses include:

**Restoration Ecology**, an emerging science that reclaims and restores the land to pre-settlement era status. It will be offered on Saturday, July 26 and taught by Caron Wenzel who is an Environmental Educator and Master Gardener.

**Victorian High Style and Vernacular Landscape Design for the Upper Midwest** will be offered on Saturday, Aug. 16. This course, taught by Dean Sheaffer, principle of Sheaffer Landscape Architects, Dixon, Illinois which specializes in historic preservation and design, will allow participants to “peak” into the minds of our Midwest Victorian ancestors regarding spatial organization and beauty.

**Preserving Historic Trees: A Workshop on the Specialized Techniques Needed to Care for Aged Trees in Cultural Landscapes** will be held on Saturday, Oct. 11 and presented by Charles Pepper, Deputy Director, Olmsted Center for Landscape Preservation, National Park Service. This workshop will focus on the principles and practices of caring for older historic specimen trees in cultural landscapes.

Full details of these courses will be emailed to all Master Gardener Coordinators as soon as the brochure is available. If you are interested in any or all of the workshops, contact your MG Coordinator. If you would like to learn more about Campbell Center, you can find them at: www.campbellcenter.org.

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Microsporidia
**A Possible Control for Gypsy Moth**

Based on studies conducted at the University of Illinois, some species of microsporidia, protozoan-like pathogens native to Europe, are perhaps three years from being released in Illinois to help control gypsy moths.

Since the late 1860s, when the gypsy moth was introduced to the United States, it has had devastating effects on oak trees throughout the northeastern part of the country. When the pests occur in large numbers in successive years, tree mortality is high. While the gypsy moth has only been present in Illinois for a little more than 20 years, only in the past two to three years has it become a major concern as the leading edge of the main population has reached the state.

Several species of microsporidia are natural enemies of gypsy moths. When released in a population of gypsy moths, certain species of the microsporidia will attack only the gypsy moths and are not infective to the majority of non-target insects. Infection can occur when an insect ingests spores from plants contaminated by other infected larvae or insect cadavers or through passage of infected females to their offspring.

Although the microsporidia were tested against 50 native forest moth species in the lab, field tests were needed to evaluate the risks to non-target species. Solter found that 10% of the non-target species became infected, but she is unsure if it can be passed on to other insects. She plans to do further studies in Bulgaria where both the gypsy moth and microsporidia are native. Molecular scientists have just recently determined that these pathogens are fungi rather than protozoa. Dr Solter hopes to make a recommendation to the EPA and the USDA APHIS on releasing microsporidia into isolated woodlots when her research is finished.

* (U of I News, June 24, 2003)

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Openings for Master Gardener Advisory Committee

Master Gardeners are needed to fill two spots on the Master Gardener state advisory committee. Terms of service are concluding for representatives from the Southern and Northwest regions. The advisory committee plays a key role in determining state policies as well as the future directions of the Illinois Master Gardener program. If you are interested in serving on this committee, please request an application from the state Master Gardener Office. **Applications are due July 15th** and the 3-year term begins September 1, 2003.
Pesticide Use in Demonstration Gardens

Volunteers, have you got weeds nestling in your beds, beetles feasting on your roses, and more mildew than you know what to do with? It’s up to you to remedy the situation. You’ve tried various preventative and cultural tactics; now you are resorting to pesticides. There are several good general use products that are easily obtainable, relatively inexpensive, and available for use by gardeners.

It’s D-day for your pest!
You’re armed with your pesticide of choice. It’s a sunny day with a light breeze. You are properly dressed to protect yourself according to label specifications and the Pesticide Safety chapter in your MG manual. But do you have your pesticide applicator license? Did you know that you needed one?

You must be licensed
Many University of Illinois Master Gardeners are unaware of this. The Illinois Pesticide Act states that if you apply pesticides in the course of your employment or on property you do not own, you must be licensed. This also applies to volunteer work and this means all pesticides, even the ones you use at your home without a license. There are some exceptions; certain minimum risk pesticides do not require Federal registration. EPA’s “25b list”, which includes garlic and garlic oil, can be found at http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/biopesticides/regtools/25b_list.htm. Illinois has the right to require registration of these products anyway. If it does, you still need a license to apply. You can search for active ingredient registration at http://www.kellysolutions.com/IL/searchbychem.asp or call the Illinois Department of Agriculture (numbers given below).

How to obtain a license
You will need to take the General Standards exam (100 multiple-choice questions) and score at least a 70%. This will make you an “operator”. However, at least one person from your county will need to go one step further and become an “applicator”. Operators work under the direct supervision of the applicator. An operator can become an applicator by scoring at least a 70% on an appropriate category exam (50 multiple-choice questions). There are various categories including pest control in Turf, Ornamentals, Fruit, and Vegetables; each is a separate exam. Since your entire range of pesticide use must be covered by the categories on the applicator’s license, this could mean several exams. Another option would be to take the Demonstration and Research category exam which would cover all plants in your demonstration garden. Also, put some consideration into choosing your applicator(s). If the applicator is out of town or not available, the operator may not legally apply pesticides. You must be in daily contact with each other at the time the pesticide application is going to be made.

The costs involved
As U of I Master Gardeners, you are classified as employees of a state agency so your license will be classified as “public” for which there is no fee. Also, there is no charge to take any test. Really the only costs to you will be your study materials (see below), your time studying, and your transportation costs to the Illinois Dept. of Agriculture in Springfield (800-641-3934) or Des Plaines (847-294-4343) where testing is held. Call ahead to schedule an appointment. The costs of applying without a license are much greater: expensive fines, tarnished reputation, plagues of locusts in your lilies (I’m kidding about this last one).

For further information
Contact the Illinois Dept. of Agriculture for questions concerning testing and licensing or check out their website at http://www.agr.state.il.us/Environment/Pesticide/training/commappl.html

Study materials are recommended and can be purchased at your local U of I Extension office or ordered by calling the University of Illinois Pesticide Applicator Training office at 800-644-2123 or 217-244-2123. To learn more about study options, license categories and requirements, go to http://www.pesticidesafety.uiuc.edu/ and click on “training schedule.” Talk to your Master Gardener Coordinator about training and testing options that may be available in your area.

Michelle Wiesbrook
Extension Specialist
Pesticide Applicator Training/Horticulture

Visit the IL. Master Gardener website: http://www.extension.uiuc.edu/mg
Illinois Turfgrass and Landscape Field Day

The 2003 University of Illinois Turfgrass and Landscape Field Day will be held Thursday August 7 at the Landscape Research Center and Hartley Selections Garden, both on South Lincoln Avenue in Urbana. The morning will feature a trade show and viewing of current turfgrass, nursery and landscape research. Research stops include weed controls, insect updates, disease management, cultivar evaluation and turf cultural studies. See the latest bedding plant selections at the Hartley Gardens in the U of I. Arboretum. In the afternoon, several horticultural seminars and tours will be offered including a *Birds on the Golf Course* workshop offered in conjunction with the Natural History Survey. Advance registration is $30 (includes lunch). Registration forms and payment must be received by July 31st. For more information or to register, contact Carol Preston, S-406 Turner Hall, 1102 S. Goodwin Ave., Urbana, IL. 61801 217-333– 7738