



# Imagine

Illinois Master Gardeners' Information,  
News and Education

Vol. 8 No. 5

September-October 2007

## Coordinators' Comments

Happy autumn to everyone! It looks like we are on track to have one of our biggest state conferences on record—hope you are able to join us! Mark your calendars for September 11-13, 2008 and plan to join us at the Westin Lombard for next year's conference.

It has been a busy summer with the advent of too much rain in the north and too little rain in the south; cicadas, Japanese beetles and emerald ash borer. This doesn't include the routine questions you answer through your hotlines, walk-in clinics and answer booths. Questions always arise from clients on how to treat those insects and disease problems. I want to remind you that only research-based recommendations should be given to clients. You may be coaxed to give out home remedies that you have used or come across but **DON'T BE TEMPTED** to give these out! Also, as most of you are aware— a chemical spray is not always the answer and often times will not remedy the situation at all. Like parents who push for an antibiotic prescription for every childhood snuffle, our clients may push for a chemical recommendation for every problem. Please inform your clients of cultural control methods, resistant varieties and proper plant selection techniques for managing diseases and insects.

However, in some situations the use of a chemical may be necessary. Some Master Gardeners routinely give out chemical recommendations to homeowners, while in many counties only the educator or the staff give out these recommendations. If you don't know which is the case in your county— please ask your county coordinator! Remember that questions that come from commercial companies or public entities should be referred to the coordinator or educator. If you are allowed to give out chemical recommendations to homeowners in your county, please be sure to use the *Home, Yard and Garden Pest Guide* from U of I Extension as your reference. A copy should be available in every county office for your use. You may purchase a personal copy for around \$24 from ITCS at 1-800-345-6087 or ACES PUBS@uiuc.edu.

✍ Monica David, IL Master Gardener Coordinator

## The Gardens of Ireland



Ireland is famous for its castle gardens, its emerald green landscape and its lush gardens. The mild and moist Irish climate is very well suited to plant growth. Certainly the light in Ireland does astonishing things to the color of plants. The near-constant presence of clouds and the near-certain absence of sun make flower colors throb and beckon.

Join Illinois Master Gardener Coordinator Monica David as she escorts you on a leisurely tour of the Irish countryside and the most famous gardens of central and southern Ireland. The trip is highlighted by visits to Powerscourt House, gardens and Ireland's highest waterfall. Another feature is the Birr Castle Demesne which includes one of the largest telescopes in the world, formal gardens with box hedges and a collection of over a thousand species of trees and shrubs. Inacullin on Garnish Island is an island of rare beauty with trees and shrubs from around the world. Another stop on the tour is Lakemount, named a "flagship garden" by the Royal Horticulture Society. Lismore Castle and gardens, Anne's Grove, Altamont Gardens and Mt. Usher will delight with formal and informal garden styles and with excellent collections of trees, shrubs, roses and perennials. The trip also includes two days of strolling through private gardens such as Helen Dillon's garden, Carmel Duignan's garden, Warble Bank and Anna Nolan's Garden. We will be traveling during the end of the rhododendron blooming period but the roses and perennials will be in their early glory. Free time to explore will be available in Dublin, Killarney, and Kilkenny.

Tour dates are June 2 to 12th, 2008. Tour price of \$3,949 includes airfare, hotels, local travel by private coach, all breakfasts and some lunches and dinners. Check [www.extension.uiuc.edu/mg](http://www.extension.uiuc.edu/mg) for complete information. All we ask is that you make your commitment to the tour as soon as possible. In order to hold a place and make sure we have our minimum numbers we must have your deposit by **September 15th**. Deposits have to be sent on that date to hotel and coach companies to guarantee our trip.

## Chairperson's Chat

### Skwerls anyone?

We have been doing a series of events this past year teaching people how to make their urban landscapes more "wildlife friendly". So far, we have been focusing on butterflies, birds and bats. I had the wonderful and unique opportunity to pet a bat at one of our events. The bat was very soft and silky. (Have you noticed that hanging around U of I Extension pretty much always leads to awesome stuff?) But with a nod to diversity, one should recognize that not all people want to attract wildlife to their yards. Even though you and I know bats are good, some people just are not going to welcome them. Same for bees, deer, and others I could mention.

And then there are squirrels. Some people think squirrels are cute furry critters that gaily chase each other around the yard. They feed them and find them very entertaining.

But then there are the *other* people. They see squirrels as the culprits who eat expensive tulip bulbs, steal food from the bird feeder and chatter constantly every time the beloved cat sits



anywhere near the window. At one time, when I was a more serious gardener, I trained my trusty dog Klick to bark at squirrels to keep them away from the tomatoes. Squirrels are the only, I mean the *only* thing she barks at. Believe me when I say that I know when one is near.

I recently learned that the second week in October is National Squirrel Awareness Week. Why? You ask. Who knows? But if you want to learn more about National Squirrel Awareness Week, you should visit [www.scarysquirrel.org/special/nsaw/index.html](http://www.scarysquirrel.org/special/nsaw/index.html).

There is a lot to laugh about here, and **none** of it is University of Illinois research-based information. This is just for fun and laughs, and to ponder about the way some folks spend their free time. I'd rather spend mine in the yard, but a laugh is always good for lowering the blood pressure.

Chattering away,  
Barbara Bates, Advisory Committee Chairperson

## USDA Announces Colony Collapse Disorder Research Action Plan

U.S. Department of Agriculture Under Secretary Gale Buchanan announced that USDA researchers have finalized an action plan for dealing with colony collapse disorder (CCD) of honey bees.

"There were enough honey bees to provide pollination for U.S. agriculture this year, but beekeepers could face a serious problem next year and beyond," Buchanan said. "This action plan provides a coordinated framework to ensure that all of the research that needs to be done is covered in order to get to the bottom of the CCD problem."

The action plan coordinates the federal strategy in response to CCD. It addresses four main components: (1) survey and data collection needs; (2) analysis of samples to determine the prevalence of various pests and pathogens, exposure to pesticides, or other unusual factors; (3) controlled experiments to carefully analyze the potential causes of CCD; and (4) developing new methods to improve the general health of bees to reduce their susceptibility to CCD and other disorders.

Four possible causes for CCD are identified in the plan: (1) new or reemerging pathogens, (2) new bee pests or parasites, (3) environmental and/or nutritional stress, or (4) pesticides. Research will focus on determining which of these factors are contributing causes of CCD, either individually or in combination.

CCD became apparent as a problem beginning in the winter of 2006-2007 when some beekeepers began reporting losses of 30-90 percent of their hives. While colony losses are not unexpected during winter weather, the magnitude of loss suffered by some beekeepers was highly unusual.

There is currently no recognizable underlying cause for CCD. The main symptom is finding no or a low number of adult honey bees present with no dead honey bees in the hive. Often there is still honey in the hive and immature bees (brood) are present.

Pollination is a critical element in agriculture, as honey bees pollinate more than 130 crops in the United States and add \$15 billion in crop value annually.

Even before the completion of this research plan, considerable research efforts have begun to be redirected to deal with CCD including work at the University of Illinois on a whole bee genome.

## Operation Rejuvenation

After the hurricanes Katrina and Rita devastated Mississippi in the fall of 2005, a fund (Operation Rejuvenation) was established through the Mississippi Master Gardener State Association to receive donations from Master Gardeners and the public. To date, over \$17,000 has been deposited and several public areas have been restored using these funds. These include Gulfport High School; the John Henry Beck Park in Harrison County; O'Keefe School in Ocean Springs; and the Hancock County schools and Child Center.

Plans are in place for a major replanting event this fall. The dates are October 24, 25 and 26th and it is being called "Operation Rejuvenation Swarm". Master Gardeners are invited to the gulf coast to assist Mississippi Master Gardeners with landscape rejuvenation projects in the coastal counties. Volunteers will be responsible for contacting local coordinators about work details and for providing their own transportation and lodging. For details on how you can participate check the website at <http://msmastergardener.org>

Donations are still needed to complete ongoing projects and to help support the fall workdays in October. Many thanks to the McLean County Master Gardeners and Mr. and Mrs. David Hines for their financial support to date.

Several members of the Illinois Master Gardener State advisory committee have advocated that counties accept this as a county project. Donations could be collected from volunteers or monies from local fundraisers could be used. The State Master Gardener office would serve as a collection site for these monies and would forward them to the Mississippi Coordinator. If you wish to donate, please send checks, made out to Operation Rejuvenation, to the state office by **October 15th**.

## Midwest Regional Master Gardener Conference to be held

The Southeast Wisconsin Master Gardeners are pleased to announce "Gardening through the Continuum of Life", the Midwest Region Master Gardener conference to be held July 16-19, 2008. The conference will be held at the Four Points by Sheraton Milwaukee Airport Hotel directly across from the Milwaukee General Mitchell International Airport.

This conference was previously known as the Tri-State MG conference (Wisconsin, Iowa, Minnesota) but last year Illinois joined the group of hosting states and it became the Midwest Regional Conference.

The conference weekend begins with six fantastic motor coach tours to private gardens in the area. Among the twenty plus gardens featured in the tours: shade gardens and gardens with native plants; one highlighting antique outhouses and one garden designed especially for visitors in wheelchairs; others with unique combinations of vegetables and perennials as well as a tremendous variety of woody plants; the garden of a renowned rose hybridizer and many more.

Speakers will include a Gene Rothert, enabling garden author, educator and manager of the Chicago Botanic Gardens' Buehler Enabling Garden & Horticulture Therapy Services; Michael Weishan of the PBS Victory Garden; Edward Lyon, Director of the Janesville Rotary Garden and Melinda Myers, author and host of Public Television's Great Lakes Gardener. Breakout topics range from home irrigation to 18th century gardens for today. Saturday morning hands-on day is a time to try something new.

Check this website in the upcoming months for more conference information: [www.premierwebplatform.com/southeastwisconsinmgardeners](http://www.premierwebplatform.com/southeastwisconsinmgardeners)



*Fine Gardening* magazine has partnered with Master Gardener programs across the country, including Illinois, to help raise funds for local horticultural programs. *Fine Gardening* will donate \$10 for every new, paid, 1-, 2-, or 3-year subscription order from a gardener in our state. The person purchasing the subscription does not need to be a Master Gardener so let your friends and neighbors know about this new program. The state advisory committee will be having its annual fall meeting soon and will be looking into how best to use this money for county projects and scholarships.

For further information and to take advantage of this partnership go to: [FineGardening.com/IL](http://FineGardening.com/IL)  
The program lasts through May 31, 2008.

Please note that the mention of this specific business or trade name does not constitute an endorsement of this product by University of Illinois Extension.

## Field Guide to Herbicide Injury on Landscape Plants

Distinguishing herbicide injury from other kinds of abnormalities on landscape plants can be challenging. The *Field Guide to Herbicide Injury on Landscape Plants* presents more than 200 color photographs of several herbicide families, with images of vegetables, annuals and herbaceous and woody perennials. Diseases and environmental conditions that may show similar symptoms are also highlighted in the key. Illinois Master Gardeners should remember however, that possible cases of herbicide drift should be referred to their local coordinator and the Illinois Dept. of Ag for definitive diagnosis.

This 112-page, color coded field guide is an excellent resource. It is available for \$10 and can be ordered by calling Kris Ritter at 217-333-4424 or by email at [karitter@uiuc.edu](mailto:karitter@uiuc.edu)

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