



Imagine

Illinois Master Gardeners' Information,
News and Education

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March-April 2008

Coordinators' Comments

A small group of Illinois Master Gardeners were able to escape the Illinois winter and enjoy the flora and fauna of Costa Rica in January. I was impressed by the passion of the native people to preserve the natural beauty and the ecosystems of Costa Rica. We learned about two conservation/education projects on our journey which I felt were important to share with all of you.

SACRO (Save the Costa Rican Orchids) is a private non-profit organization created to help save the native orchids. With more than 1200 species of orchids, Costa Rica is known worldwide for having one of the greatest natural orchid densities. SACRO sponsors several projects including in vitro propagation and regional orchid gardens to preserve native orchids. Another project is "Save the Guaria Morada", the national flower of Costa Rica. School children in Nicoya schools learn about the orchid in their classes. To help prevent the eminent extinction of the Guaria Morada, children help to pollinate the flowers and are then involved in a project to disperse seeds of the orchid with model airplanes and by scattering them out of cable cars in the watershed of the Tarcoles River. (www.sacro.or.cr)

CIBRC (Central American Institute of Biological Research and Conservation) is a non-governmental non-profit organization located in San Jose, Costa Rica. CIBRC has several goals: to support basic and applied research in biology and conservation; to promote the training of young researchers and professionals; to distribute environmental education in Costa Rican communities and to generate knowledge for conservation efforts to protect biodiversity. Courses and workshops are given for college students, the public and to train naturalist guides. One project that hits close to home was a program to recover green areas and build community gardens in a low-income area. This project targets the youth to be involved in the clean-up, planting and maintenance of these gardens. (www.cibrc.org)

✍ Monica David, Master Gardener Coordinator

2008 Conference to Feature Internationally Known Speakers

The Northeast region Master Gardeners have chosen the theme "Pathways to a Greener Illinois" for the state conference to be held September 11-13 at the Westin Lombard. Conference details are posted on the website (www.extension.uiuc.edu/mg), so visit the site frequently for updates & this summer to register.

One highlight of the conference is the world renowned lineup of outstanding speakers. At the top of the impressive list is **Dan Heims** who is president of Terra Nova Nurseries, a company noted for its new introductions to horticulture. He has spent the last 32 years traveling the world in search of new perennials and his perennial breeding programs have produced many international gold and silver medal winners. Dan has numerous articles and several books to his credit and has been seen on BBC and HGTV. Dan will talk on shade gardening and on his fabulous four genera: *Pulmonaria*, *Tiarella*, *Heuchera* and *Heucherella*.

Another speaker who is sure to please is **Marcus de la fleur** who is a registered Landscape Architect with the Conservation Design Forum in Elmhurst. Marcus was educated at the School of Horticulture at the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew. He has contributed to the design and management of multiple sustainable projects and has extensive field experience in sustainable technology application through his work in Germany, Switzerland and Britain.

Ellen Ogden is a Vermont food and garden writer, author of *From the Cook's Garden* cookbook with recipes for cooks who love to garden. Ellen has over 25 years experience as a cookbook author, freelance writer, media consultant and co-founder of The Cooks Garden. She trained with Marcella Hazen in Italy and with Darina Allen at Ballymaloe in Ireland.

Check the website for more conference updates and mark your calendars to attend this wonderful conference. www.extension.uiuc.edu/mg

Important Dates

March 29: Dig into Spring, Sponsored by the Knox County Master Gardeners. 309-342-5108.

March 29: Spring Garden Seminar, Illinois Valley Community College, 815 N. Orlando Smith Ave., Oglesby, IL. 9 am to 3:15 pm. The keynote speaker is Greg Stack, U. of I. Extension educator. Attendees may choose 3 breakout sessions from these topics: ornamental grasses; bonsai; Emerald Ash Borer; roses; compost; landscaping; pruning; herbs; tree ID and more. Fee of \$30 includes continental breakfast and lunch. Sponsored by the LaSalle County Master Gardeners. 815-433-0707 or register online at www.extension.edu/lasalle

March 29: Gardening Insights, Lutheran School Association, 2001 E Mound Rd., Decatur, IL. 9 am to 12 pm. Three separate class sessions with four choices of topics. Classes feature these topics: apple tree grafting; native plants in the landscape; butterfly and moth gardening; rose gardening; rain barrel workshop and culinary herbs in the landscape. Fee is \$10 pre-paid and \$12 at the door. Sponsored by the Macon County Master Gardeners. Register online at www.extension.uiuc.edu/macon or call 217-877-6042.

April 4: Emerald Ash Borer Readiness and Awareness Workshop, Knox County Extension Office, 180 S Soangetatha Rd, Galesburg, IL. 9 am to Noon. Presenters include Warren Goetsch from the IL Dept of Agriculture; Dr. Thomas Green, Urban Forestry Professor from WIU and Kari Houle, U. of I. Extension Educator. The workshop is free but you must pre-register. 309-342-5108.

April 5: Gardener's Big Day, Spoon River College, Canton, IL. 8 am. to 3:40 pm. Martha Smith, U. of I. Extension educator will give a keynote address on miniature gardening and Dr. Janis Coons from EIU will close the day with a talk on native prairie plants. Other sessions include: Body Smart Gardening; Perennial Plants of the Year; Herbs; "What Bugs You"; All-America Selections and Artistic, Bold, Creative Design. Fee of \$22 includes lunch, speakers and vendors. Sponsored by the Fulton County Master Gardeners and Spoon River College. 309-647-6260.

April 5: Gardenfest 2008– Ready, Set, Grow, McHenry County College, 8900 U.S. HWY. 14, Crystal Lake, IL. Storyteller, Master Gardener and organic farmer Rich Tobiasz will present the keynote "Make Mine Green". There will be 27 other classes, some hands-on, some lecture, featuring instructors from Extension, McHenry County Hort Department and local green professionals. Sponsored by the McHenry County Master Gardeners and McHenry County College. 815-455-8697.

April 10: Soar into Spring!, Edgar County 4-H Fairgrounds, IL Hwy. 1 North, Paris, IL. 8 am to 3 pm. Four sessions including New Proven Winner Selections and the Selection Process; Garden Junk– Garden Art; Pollination– Understanding and Protecting Pollinators and Mini demos by the Edgar County MGs (hypertufa, leaf casting, gourd decorating and more). Program fee of \$10 and a \$5 lunch donation for the Edgar County Master Gardeners. Silent auction and door prizes will be given out. Register online at www.extension.uiuc.edu/edgar or call 217-465-8585.

April 26: Illinois Native Plant Society Plant Sale, Washington Park Botanical Garden, 1740 W. Fayette Ave., Springfield, IL. 9 am to 2 pm. Prairie plants, woodland plants, trees and rare woody and herbaceous plants will be for sale. Call Mary Ring 217-243-6055 or John Benedict 217-652-7705.

April 26, May 10, May 17: 2008 Spring Gardening Series, Friendship Park Conservatory, Des Plaines, IL. 9 am to Noon on each Saturday morning. The workshops will be based on three themes, namely– Landscape Design, Flowers, Trees and Shrubs. Hands-on demonstrations at each workshop. For more information call 847-818-2901.

July 16-19: Midwest Regional Master Gardener Conference, Wyndham Milwaukee Airport Hotel, Milwaukee, WI. Six tours available including shade gardens and gardens housing native plants; a handicapped garden and a garden by a recognized rosarium. Speakers include Michael Weishan (late of PBS' Victory Garden), Ed Lyon (Director of the Janesville Rotary Garden) and Gene Rothert (enabling garden author and manager of the CBG Buehler Enabling Garden). A multitude of choices for break-out sessions. **Registration is now open on the website:** <http://sewmg.encampus.com/>

**Deadline for submission of articles for the next issue is
April 15, 2008.**

Horticultural Therapy Training Offered for Master Gardeners

Chicago Botanic Garden May 15 thru Oct 15

The Chicago Botanic Garden introduces a new Horticultural Therapy workshop designed for Master Gardeners. The workshop will focus on the practical aspects of barrier-free garden design, adaptive tools and equipment and the best sensory plant materials used in horticultural therapy activities. Master Gardeners who complete the program will have the basic skills necessary to successfully guide the design and construction



of an enabling garden, which is designed to be universally accessible, and run programs that can be supported by an enabling garden.

Horticultural therapy is the use of professionally directed plant, gardening and nature activities to help restore physical and mental health. It is primarily applied at healthcare and human service agencies serving people with disabilities, older adults and those recovering from illness. Since 1976, the Chicago Botanic Garden has been at the forefront in this field. The Garden's Horticultural Therapy Services department is a major provider of training, and its program serves as an example and resource to other institutions throughout the country and the world.

The 11,000-square-foot Buehler Enabling Garden at the Chicago Botanic Garden is among the preeminent gardens of its type in the world. Its state-of-the-art structures, tools, techniques and programming are designed to help people of all ages and abilities enjoy gardening for a lifetime.

The workshops are available on a reservation basis and are conducted outdoors in the Buehler Enabling Garden from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Monday through Friday from May 15 through October 15, weather permitting. Cost is \$50 per person, with a minimum of 5 people. Lunch is available at an additional cost.

For more information or to register, call (847) 835-8250, or visit the Garden's Web site at www.chicagobotanic.org/therapy/MasterGardener.

If you would like to form a group to reserve a workshop but don't have enough volunteers from your county—contact Monica David at modavid@uiuc.edu. We currently have 2-3 Master Gardeners from the Vermilion/Edgar county area who would like to set-up a workshop but need a few other volunteers to join them.

Scientists Look for Clues into How Tree Populations Become Invasive

By studying the Callery Pear tree, scientists have determined how nonthreatening plants have become invasive, as the trees are now dense and thorny and are expanding into urban locations they were never intended to grow in.

Ornamental plants, like the Callery Pear, were originally planted in the United States for their beauty and were not considered an invasive threat because they did not produce fruit. Over the past decade, the Callery Pear has evolved to become a significant invasive tree species. Besides producing fruit, which can be messy and cause the population to expand into inconvenient locations, the newly evolved trees are dense and thorny. Scientists are using the Callery Pear as a model for studying the factors that contribute to the evolution of invasive traits in introduced plants.

Callery Pear trees were first introduced to the United States from China in the early 1900s and became one of the most popular ornamental tree species planted in urban areas. This species, which includes the Bradford, Aristocrat and Cleveland Select varieties, was chosen because it produces an impressive springtime flower display and vibrant fall foliage and is tolerant to drought and pollution. Within the last decade however, wild type Callery pear trees, *Pyrus calleryana*, have begun producing fruit, allowing them to multiply in natural areas, especially in disturbed sites along railroads, roads and park boundaries. Urban backyards are not immune to the tree expansion and the fruit is appearing in neighborhoods where it was not invited. The situation is aggravated by bird species, such as starlings, that disperse the tree fruit. In addition, the seedling plants differ from its cultivated parent, growing densely and producing impressive thorns that make controlling the new tree a challenge.

Theresa Culley and Nicole Hardiman at the University of Cincinnati published their findings in the December issue of the journal *Bioscience*. The scientists determined that having multiple varieties planted in the same area can lead to the production of a new and invasive variety. This is known as intraspecific hybridization between the widespread 'Bradford' variety and other newer varieties. By understanding the factors that contribute to the evolution of invasiveness in an introduced species, scientists can provide practical suggestions for how the horticultural industry can monitor plant introductions and implement effective methods of control to prevent introduced plants from becoming invasive and spreading within the United States.

By Stacy Kish, USDA CSREES (www.csrees.usda.gov)

IDNR Awards Schoolyard Habitat Action Grants

Hundreds of Illinois students will have the opportunity to work on improving natural habitats outside of the classroom while supporting their studies, thanks to grant funding from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Division of Education Schoolyard Habitat Action Grant program. Eighteen organizations are receiving almost \$8,800 in funds to support prairie plots, butterfly gardens, rain gardens, stormwater wetlands & bird sanctuaries that students will develop and use for natural resources research. Funding for the Schoolyard Habitat Action Grant program is provided through a donation by the Jadel Family Foundation and is administered by the Illinois Conservation Foundation. Since the program's inception, more than \$83,000 has been distributed.

Illinois Schoolyard Habitat Action Grant Awardees:

Clinton County

Aviston Elementary School, Aviston. Grades: 1 and 5. Project: Design & plant a butterfly garden.

Coles County

Douglas-Hart Nature Center, Mattoon. Grade: 4. Project: Develop a stormwater wetland area.

Cook County

Glenwood School for Boys and Girls, Glenwood. Grade: 5. Project: Design and implement a rain garden. Ravenswood Elementary School, Chicago. Grades: 7-8. Project: Prepare a bird and butterfly sanctuary with native plants and bird houses.

Cumberland County

Neoga Community Unit School District #3, Neoga. Grades: 4-12. Project: Construct a butterfly garden to enhance an existing outdoor classroom.

De Kalb County

Genoa Davenport Elementary School Unit District 424, Genoa. Grades: K-8. Project: Develop a hands-on prairie demonstration garden.

Jefferson County

Opdyke Attendance Center, Opdyke. Grades: 4-8. Project: Create butterfly and hummingbird gardens and a prairie plot.

Jersey County

St. Francis/Holy Ghost School, Jerseyville. Grades: K-4. Project: Develop a butterfly habitat area.

Kendall County

Traughber Junior High School, Oswego. Grades: 6-8. Project: Establish a native prairie habitat at the school.

La Salle County

Mendota High School, Mendota. Grades: 9-12. Project: Plant a prairie/butterfly habitat.

McDonough County

Bushnell-Prairie City Elementary School, Bushnell. Grades: 4-5. Project: Create a butterfly/hummingbird garden.

McHenry County

Prairie Hill School, Cary. Grades: 5-6. Project: Establish a schoolyard prairie plot.

Monroe County

University of Illinois Extension and Junior Master Gardeners, Waterloo. Grades: K-12. Project: Plant a butterfly garden.

Piatt County

Monticello Middle School, Monticello. Grades: 6 and 8. Project: Enlarge an existing prairie garden.

Randolph County

Chester High School, Chester. Grades: 9-12. Project: Design and plant a butterfly garden.

Union County

Lick Creek Elementary School #16, Buncombe. Grades: K-8. Project: Plant a butterfly garden with native wildflowers.

Will County

Pioneer Path Kindergarten, Channahon. Grade: kindergarten. Project: Develop a flower garden and install bird feeders.

Winnebago County

Harlem Middle School, Love's Park. Grades: 7-8. Project: Design and implement a schoolyard rain garden.

MG License Plate Holders For Sale



The MG state office will be offering license plate holders for sale with this year's apparel orders. The plates are heavy black plastic with the words "Master Gardeners Know All the Good Dirt". Cost is

\$5 per holder. A portion of the proceeds benefit the 2011 International Master Gardener Conference. Holders may be ordered online with the apparel order at: www.extension.uiuc.edu/mg/

eXtension Website launched Feb 08

A groundbreaking new website was launched in late February, eXtension.org, which can help answer questions- from parenting, to saving and investing, entrepreneurship and vegetable gardens. The site has 16 resource areas called “Communities of Practice”, where consumers can easily navigate the site to find exactly the answers they need. A Community of Practice is typically multi-institutional, multi-state and multi-disciplinary bringing the “best of the best” educational resources to the public. eXtension is affiliated with the Cooperative Extension, a nationwide, non-credit educational network. The website offers credible expertise and reliable answers based on sound research and field-tested data as well as up-to-date 24 hour availability from any Internet connection. It also features customized answers to specific consumer questions, a searchable knowledge base and “Ask the Expert” options. Users can readily link to their own state and county Extension offices for localized information.

Gardens, Lawns and Landscapes is the area of eXtension which has been developed by the Consumer Horticulture Community of Practice and highlights the best information on gardening and horticulture available from top universities across the country. Browse through information related to all aspects of plant care in and around the home. A few of the major topics covered are: trees and shrubs; flower gardening; vegetables and herbs; lawns; landscaping; indoor plants and insects and diseases.

Users who want more specific information on a garden or landscape problem may search through the database of Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). There are currently 1,100 questions online and more will be added in the future. Currently most questions are broadly applicable, but state-specific or hardiness-zone-specific questions are being developed as well. If you don't find what you are looking for in the FAQ section, Ask an Expert is another option. This option allows you to get relevant answers from local experts. Users will be asked to indicate their location by logging in so that the answers are specific to their state and growing zones. In Illinois, Master Gardeners and University of Illinois Extension Horticulture Educators will answer questions.

Master Gardeners are an important component of the Consumer Horticulture Community of Practice. The national website for Master Gardeners is also housed within the eXtension- Gardens, Lawns and Landscapes site. This site provides information on local and state Master Gardener programs, the International Master Gardener Conference and the Search for Excellence International Master Gardener awards.

Check out the extension website: www.eXtension.org and book mark it for future reference!

What Do You Do With Used Containers?

It's a common garden problem: after you add new plants to the garden each year, what do you do with all the used containers? If you are like most gardeners, the stack of empty pots, cell packs & flats is way more than you can reuse before next season. They may take up lots of space in your garage but they are also taking up room in local landfills. According to a 2004 estimate by Penn State University, each year 320 million pounds of plastic are used to make pots, cell packs and flats (Pelczar, 2008).

The major concern with reusing plastic containers is that the soil residue may contain disease organisms and large scale cleaning and disinfecting is costly. Home gardeners can give each used pot a good scrubbing with a 10% bleach solution and then reuse the pots or donate them to schools or local organizations.

Last September, TerraCycle, a company that produces organic fertilizer in recycled soda bottles, began a program with Stonyfield Farm called the “Yogurt Brigade” that collects yogurt containers from schools and various non-profit groups for recycling as plant pots. The containers are collected, cleaned and shipped by TerraCycle who then donates two to five cents to the charitable organization or school selected by the collecting group.

If you can't reuse your pots, recycling is the next best option. This presents unique problems, however, as several types of plastics are used to make pots and most recycling programs limit the types of plastics they will take. Pots must also be clean for most recycling programs and the containers are only seasonally generated. To promote recycling, the New Jersey Dept. of Agriculture has established an online listing of private vendors who collect plastic for recycling. The list of vendors on the site is small but growing.

The William T. Kemper Center for Home Gardening at the Missouri Botanical Garden (MOBOT) in St. Louis initiated its recycling program in 1997. Public collection includes a satellite system where recycling trailers are placed at garden centers as well as weekend collection days. The program also provides a specific time for nurseries to bring their plastic in truckloads. In 2007, MOBOT collected more than 100,000 pounds of horticultural plastic, for a total of more than 3 tons of recycled plastic in the last 10 years (Pelczar, 2008). This plastic is then used in raised-bed kits, compost bins and landscape timbers. Volunteers at the Chicago Botanic Garden clean pots for reuse. The surplus pots are shipped to Canada for recycling. Reusing and recycling plastic pots are just two of the ways we can minimize waste and reduce waste in our landfills.

Pelczar, Rita. (Jan/Feb 2008) Solving the container conundrum. *The American Gardener*. pp 48-51.

Master Gardener Apparel for Sale

This newsletter includes a color sell sheet for the 2008 apparel. This year all ordering will be done online. Go to the Master Gardener website at www.extension.uiuc.edu/mg/ and choose the link for apparel on the homepage. You may use either credit card or check— but again all ordering must be done online. **The deadline for ordering is April 18— no late orders.**

The total price includes shipping to your local Extension office. Select your items carefully as all sales are final. **Please pick up your merchandise promptly after you are notified that the merchandise has arrived in your office. We will not be responsible for replacing damaged or missing apparel after July 1, 2008.**

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