



Imagine

Illinois Master Gardeners' Information,
News and Education

Vol. 11 No. 4
July-August 2010

Coordinators Comments

The Extension reorganization plans have caused much anxiety among staff and volunteers in the last few months. There remains many unanswered questions at this time and some of these will only be answered as the reorganization unfolds. I ask for your patience and support as we move forward with the changes. I can however let you know that there are no plans to discontinue the Master Gardener program in Illinois. We may look different over time but our program is well supported, as you demonstrated with your comments at the Extension public listening sessions. We will continue with our work helping citizens and delivering research-based horticultural information.

However, the two changes that will effect MGs directly are staffing and the location of some offices. We hope very much that the educators and local MG Coordinators we depend so much on can be retained. However, this may not be the case in every unit due to funding issues. We also have some very wonderful staff who are taking retirement soon. We thank them for their excellent service and leadership. At this time, educators and county directors are getting ready to apply for positions in the new system. The selection is due to be completed later this fall. I cannot at this time let you know who will be the staff who coordinates your local MG program. I do however urge you very strongly to voice your opinions to county and regional directors about the importance of having a staff person to provide leadership to your local MG program. Now is the time to be vocal as the current county directors will be submitting budgets for staffing very soon.

Here is what we do know at this stage:

- All of the counties have realigned into 27 multi-county units. If you are unsure of your new unit configuration, visit our website under "News and Updates" where I have posted the map.
- Each new unit will have a hub office— those locations have not been finalized. Some local offices may close or be relocated. If you think your office may be relocated— talk to your county MG Coordinator for details.

- Master Gardener training for 2011 is currently being scheduled. If at all possible we will offer training at the regularly scheduled sites. Online training will also be offered in 2011.

- It is "business as usual" for the services provided by the State Coordinator.

- We will have our 2010 state conference and plans are beginning for conference 2011.

I will try to keep you apprised of updates in the next issue of *Imagine*. Thanks for all your volunteer efforts!

 Monica David, State Coordinator

2010 Upper Midwest Master Gardener Conference County Networking Activity

We are asking each county Master Gardener group to document their one favorite project or activity for the 2010 Upper Midwest Master Gardener Conference. Submissions will be used to create three presentations. The first is a digital PDF booklet showcasing all the submissions as a resource for Master Gardeners; it will be created as a file that can be downloaded from the conference website. The second, the submissions will be used in a digital slide presentation (PowerPoint) that will be shown during Friday lunch. Third, one submission from each state will be made into a poster presentation that will be displayed in the lobby of the conference.

The project or activity can be anything, the purpose is to share the information and inspire other Master Gardeners. We would appreciate receiving 1-4 photographs and a paragraph or two describing the project or activity. Please include the how, when, where and why in the description.

Please limit each photograph size to less than 1MB. Jpeg format would be helpful, which is the default on most digital cameras. Descriptions can be included in the email message or as an attached file in any word processor or PDF format. Please email your submissions to Shey Lowman, Illinois Ogle County Master Gardener, at slowman@niu.edu **no later than August 1, 2010.**

Important Dates

July 9-13: International Herb Association Conference, DoubleTree Hotel, Collinsville, IL. Pre and post conference tours on July 9th and July 13th. The all star cast of presenters includes Betsy Williams, Sal Gilbertie, Pat Crocker, Arthur and Sherry Tucker, Susan Belsinger, Tina Marie Wilcox and Pat Kenny. Saturday July 10th is the public education day and Sunday and Monday July 11, 12th are more geared toward business topics. A marketplace for vendors will be available. For the complete brochure visit the IHA website at <http://www.iharb.org>.

July 10: Master's Tour, Quincy, IL. 9 am to 1 pm. Five attractive gardens will be on tour in the Quincy area. The five small areas featured belong to: Patrick Beckman 4304 Cheshire Court; Alice Rakers at 4300 Cheshire Court; Barb Richmiller at 720 Pawn Avenue; Sister Jane Wand at 3800 Columbus Road and Claire Don, 126 S. 24th. The first four are all near St. Dominic's on Columbus Road and within walking distance from one another. The cost of the tour is \$5 per person. Tickets can be bought in advance at the Extension office in Quincy or www.extension.uiuc.edu/adams Sponsored by the Adams/Brown Master Gardeners.

July 16: Master Gardener Road Trip, 8:30 am. Join the Clark County Master Gardeners as they discover the treasures of Clark County. The first stop is Johnson Branch Produce, a local sustainable family farm. The next stop is Arise Research and Discovery which conducts research on turf, vegetables, forage, field crops and greenhouse crops. After lunch at Richards Farm restaurant, the group will visit their beautiful gardens. Cost is \$20. Call 217-826-5422.

July 22-24: 2010 National Children and Youth Garden Symposium. Pasadena, CA. Keynote speakers are Alice Waters, chef and author; Roger Swain, previous host of the Victory Garden; and Sam Levin, co-founder of Project Sprout, an organic student-run garden. Forty breakout sessions on all aspects of kids gardening will be offered. The conference includes tours of Kidspace Children's Museum Gardens, the Huntington Botanical Gardens, the Helen and Peter Bing Children's Garden, and other local school, botanic and education sites. Non-AHS member registration is \$350. Visit www.ahs.org for more information or to register.

MG Conference 2010

Join Master Gardeners from Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin for the Upper Midwest Master Gardener Conference to be held September 16-18 at the Clock Tower Resort in Rockford. This conference replaces the annual Illinois state conference this year but our annual awards banquet will still be held on Friday Sept 17th to honor the winners of our Outstanding, Sustained Excellence and Teamwork Awards.

The conference kicks off with three all day and four half day tours as well as an early morning bird hike. Tour destinations include local public and private gardens as well as native prairie areas, local food producers and conservation areas. The conference also features well-known speaker and author Bill Cullina, who is the Director of Horticulture at the Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens. Thirty-five different breakout sessions covering a range of gardening topics will be offered on Friday and Saturday. Registration began on June 1st. Early bird registration for Master Gardeners and their adult guest is from June 1st to July 9th. On July 10th, registration prices increase and regular registration begins. Registration officially closes on August 31— there will be no late or onsite registration. All registration will be done online.

We have reserved sleeping rooms at a rate of \$70 but you must reserve before August 15 to receive the discounted rate. Call 1-800-358-7666 to reserve your room and mention that you are with the Upper Midwest Master Gardener conference to receive the reduced room rate.

To view the conference brochure and to register visit:
<http://web.extension.illinois.edu/mg/conference2010>

Silent Auction

We need your help to make the 7th annual Master Gardener Silent Auction a success. We are looking for donations of artwork, sculpture, paintings, books, garden tools, garden gifts etc. The auction will be held at the Upper Midwest Master Gardener conference in Rockford. Cash or checks will be accepted— sorry but we cannot accept credit cards. Plans are being developed to use the proceeds from the silent auction to offer small grants to units to fund local Master Gardener projects. You may send your donation or bring it to the conference. Please contact Nikki Keltner nkeltner@illinois.edu at the Stephenson County office **BEFORE THE CONFERENCE** to let her know what you will be donating.

Master Gardener Advisory Committee Opening

The state Master Gardener advisory committee is looking for a Master Gardener volunteer from the NE region (Chicago and suburbs). The term is for three years and the committee meets 4 times per year. These meetings are in February, May, September (at the state conference) and November. Committee members may attend the meetings in person or by telenet. The state committee is made up of 2 staff and 2 Master Gardeners from each of the five Extension regions along with the state coordinator.

The goals of the committee are:

- * To serve as advisory council to the state coordinator
- * Encourage equitable distribution of state Master Gardener resources
- * Recommend minimum standards for core training
- * Strengthen and support state education and training
- * Increase awareness of the program
- * Support an annual conference
- * Recommend policies and guidelines for the program

If you would be interested in applying for this opening (you must live in the NE region), talk to your local coordinator. There is an application form on the website at <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/mg> (on the MG Resources page). Please fill out your application and take it to your local coordinator for their approval. A supporting letter from your county director, MG coordinator or educator must accompany your application.

Applications are due to the State Office by Aug 13.

Extension Master Gardener Blog

Land grant university Extension Master Gardener (EMG) program coordinators launched the first national blog for Master Gardener volunteers on May 3, 2010. Blog posts can be found directly at <http://blogs.extension.org/mastergardener> or through the new national Extension Master Gardener website at <http://extension.org/mastergardener>

The state coordinators, our national program leader from NIFA– Bill Hoffman and guest contributors from various states are taking turns sharing a weekly blog post for the national EMG community. These blog topics highlight projects of national and local interest to all Master Gardeners. Please visit the EMG blog and submit comments using the blog commenting features.

“Sick Plants and a Hungry World” Online Class

The Department of Plant Pathology at Ohio State University is offering a non-credit online course specifically designed for Master Gardeners. The course is offered completely online through Moodle, a course management system. There are 10 modules with topics ranging from basic concepts in plant disease (such as the disease triangle) to prehistoric man and plant diseases, and from the Irish Potato Famine to bioterrorism. The course is completely self-paced, so you can take it anytime and anywhere. Although the course is designed for Master Gardeners, anyone interested in plants, history, and contemporary global issues will find it exciting.

Once you begin the online experience of “Sick Plants and a Hungry World”, the course will be available for 10 weeks. Assignments consist of module readings and self-tests. A certificate from The Ohio State University of Continuing Education will be awarded upon successful completion of the course. The course fee is \$35.

For more information or to enroll contact Sarah Ellis at ellis.293@osu.edu.

Central Region of the PPA to Host Two-day Workshop

The Central Region of the Perennial Plant Association and the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum will host a two day workshop on August 13 and 14th in Chaska, Minnesota. An impressive line-up of speakers includes Colston Burrell, acclaimed lecturer, garden designer, award-winning author and photographer; Stephanie Cohen, well-known author and lecturer; Laura Deeter, professor at The Ohio State University; Irvin Etienne, horticulturist at the Indianapolis Museum; Richard Hawke, CBG Plant Evaluation Manager and Debbie Lonnee, the production coordinator at Bailey Nurseries. Several garden and nursery tours are also included. These feature Noerenberg gardens, Tangletown Urban Gardens and three outstanding private home gardens.

The fee for this two-day program is \$175 which includes lectures, Friday lunch, breaks, coach transportation and Saturday lunch. Single day admissions are also offered.

To register, visit the PPA site at www.perennialplant.org/releases.asp for a printable registration form.

New Initiative Brings U of I College of ACES to Community Colleges

Through a new partnership called ACES Access, Illinois community college students can now combine distance education technologies with hands-on labs to complete University of Illinois courses offered by the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences (ACES).

The initiative offers students attending community colleges basic courses in plant, animal, and soil sciences that would not otherwise be available in their locale. Introductory courses in soil sciences and horticulture will be offered in fall 2010 and spring 2011.

The brainchild of Dennis Sorensen of Kankakee Community College, Michael Sloan of Illinois Central Community College, and Laurie Kramer associate dean of ACES, the collaborative effort opens the door for students to acquire the knowledge and skills applicable to the 48,000 ag-related jobs that become available each year.

In the spring 2010 semester, Howard Brown, adjunct professor in ACES' Department of Crop Sciences, taught "Introduction to Crop Sciences" to 18 students from six community colleges (Kankakee Community, Illinois Valley, Sauk Valley, Southeastern Illinois, Wilbur Wright, and Waubensee). "The virtual campus has no borders, only differences in time zones. I'm excited to be a part of ACES Access," Brown said.

The College of ACES has invited every Illinois community college to offer any or all of the courses. Participating community colleges offer ACES Access courses through their regular registration process each semester. Students pay the standard tuition rate of their home institution and earn course credit from that college. Credits can be transferred seamlessly to Illinois or other four-year institutions.

Students use distance education technologies such as the synchronous Web-based software Elluminate and course management systems such as WebCT. Courses that include laboratory experiences offer one or two Saturday sessions on the U of I's Urbana-Champaign campus.

For more information about the program, contact Heather Miller, academic outreach program director, at hmill1@illinois.edu or 217-265-6568.

The Gardens of Cornwall and the Chelsea Flower Show May 22-June 2, 2011

Enjoy springtime in Europe while visiting some of the best gardens in England! Join Master Gardener Coordinator Monica David as she leads this tour for Master Gardeners and others who love gardening. The tour begins with a visit to London with free time to explore this great city and all the historic sites. Travelers will then have a full day to enjoy the Chelsea Flower Show, the world's best-loved and most prestigious gardening event, which brings together many hundreds of exhibitors showing everything from full scale gardens to plant varieties never before seen in public. Before leaving London, the group will enjoy the Royal Botanic Garden at Kew. En route to Cornwall a stop will



be made to view the Salisbury Cathedral and then Dartington Hall and Gardens. While in Cornwall, the group will visit several outstanding gardens including Trewithen House and Gardens and the Lost Gardens of Heligan. Participants will fly via helicopter to Tresco, one of the five inhabited islands of the Isles of Scilly to view the Tresco Abby Gardens. The following day includes visits to Trengwainton Gardens and the magical St Michael's Mount castle and gardens. Returning towards London, a stop will be made to visit Wisely Gardens, home of the Royal Horticultural Society.



The tour cost per passenger (twin share) is approximately \$3600— land cost only. Airfare is additional. The cost includes all hotels, luxury coach transportation, entrance to all the gardens,

the helicopter ride to and from the Isles of Scilly, 10 breakfasts, and 6 dinners. The final costs will be posted later this summer. To book the tour or for more information contact Robyn Gulstrom at 269-629-9248 or rgulstrom@comcast.net. The trip brochure may be found at <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/mg/events/default.cfm>

When Plants Attract Bugs- it May be Their Own Fault!

If you're debating about what impatiens to plant in your yard, a recent study at the University of Illinois suggests that you go with Cajun Carmine, that is if you want fewer insects in your garden. Why some varieties of the popular bedding plant impatiens attract more thrips than others was one of the questions graduate student Katie Yu investigated.

"The fragrances given off by flowers are actually complex compounds known as plant volatiles, some of which cannot be detected by humans," Yu said.

"Volatile compounds act as a language that they use to communicate and interact with the surrounding environment. It's a defense mechanism against herbivores and it's a means to attract pollinators. As of today, there have been over 1,000 plant volatiles reported. But, none have yet to be reported in impatiens."

Impatiens, one of the top-selling bedding plants in America, is very durable, relatively easy to grow and has wholesale sales exceeding over \$170 million per year. Yu chose two the popular varieties Dazzler White and Cajun Carmine to study their resistance to the Western flower thrips.

Yu's initial research in greenhouses showed that Cajun Carmine had significantly less damage from thrips than Dazzler White. So she set out to prove the reason why, suspecting that impatiens may emit volatiles that attract the thrips.

Thrips are very tiny, sliver-like insects that are native to northwestern North America. They are a worldwide pest, causing problems in field crops and greenhouses. They are attracted to a wide range of host plants including impatiens, fuchsia, hibiscus, chrysanthemum, begonias, ivy, petunias, and major food crops. They feed on the plants' leaves and petals and transmit devastating plant viruses.

For her research, Yu used a tiny glass apparatus shaped like the letter "Y." The thrips are inserted one at a time into the base of the Y. When the thrip reaches the junction in the Y, it has the opportunity to choose to continue one way or the other. In this experiment, one of the choices was toward purified air, while the other was toward volatiles from an impatiens plant.

"Because we want to know if the thrips are choosing based on a non-visual cue, the apparatus is contained in

a black box so the thrips cannot see if they're going toward the plant or not," Yu said.



In the experiment, thrips chose Dazzler White over the purified air 64 percent of the time. The thrips chose Cajun Carmine only 53 percent of the time. "Because the thrips are blinded to the plants, it's easy to infer that they are responding to the volatile compounds," Yu said. "Thrips did not choose the Cajun Carmine preferentially over the purified air. What this implies is that Cajun Carmine does not produce a volatile attractive to thrips."

Although the percentages don't appear significantly different, Yu said that it is conclusive. "As a control, we also did the Y test with purified air only, and the thrips were choosing one side over the other 50-50. Because the thrips were choosing Cajun Carmine basically 50-50, choosing Dazzler White 64 percent of the time shows they were definitely choosing the plant [Dazzler White] over the purified air."

While preliminary, these findings are exciting to researchers seeking to minimize damage to impatiens in commercial greenhouses.

When specific plant volatiles are identified as attractant or repellents to specific insect pests, these volatiles can then be used as selection factors in plant breeding programs or by producers seeking to limit insect damage," said Yu's U of I advisor Daniel Warnock. "The development of commercially acceptable cultivars of impatiens that are not attractive to or recognized as a food source by western flower thrips will reduce insecticide usage in greenhouses as the thrips will choose to feed elsewhere. Attractant volatiles may also be used as lures to trap insects as a control method. Repellents may be used as a deterrent to feeding if formulated for application on other crops."

Future research to be conducted at the University of Illinois will focus on identifying the presence of volatile compounds in impatiens germplasm lines which show higher levels of resistance to western flower thrips feeding than Cajun Carmine. Once the presence or absence of volatiles are confirmed, researchers plan to begin fractionating the mass volatiles into specific compounds that are candidates for use in reducing insect attractiveness to greenhouse crops.

Costa Rica: Gardens, Rainforest and Wildlife February 4-13, 2011

Get away from the winter blahs and immerse yourself in a botanical paradise with this excursion to Costa Rica. This trip begins in the San Jose area at the magnificent La Paz Waterfall Gardens before heading to the Sarapiquí region and a chocolate tour at the Tirimbina Rainforest Center. Next up is the Corsicana pineapple farm (the famous Collins Street Bakery of Texas). The group will then depart for the San Ramon region of Costa Rica and will stop enroute to visit the Else Kientzler Botanical Garden, followed by a visit to the Nectandra Cloudforest Gardens and then Villa Blanca. On the way to the Pacific Coast, the group will stop at Orquimex, an important orchid exporter. We will stay at a lovely Pacific resort and will visit Carara National Park— home of monkeys and scarlet macaws. On the way back to San Jose—the group will visit Garita Orchid Garden. The farewell dinner will be hosted by Ms. Ileana Teran, founder of SACRO (Saving Costa Ricas Orchids) at her private garden.



Participants of this trip will enjoy staying in ecolodges, sampling typical Costa Rican cuisine and seeing a multitude of different plant species and glorious native birds. Our guide is an outstanding bird expert and helped to co-author a popular book on the birds of Costa Rica. There will be an opportunity for an optional side trip (not included in tour price)— whitewater rafting, horseback riding or zipping over the forest canopy on a zipline. Cost per person is \$2,940 without airfare and \$3,540 with airfare from Chicago O'Hare included. Single room supplement of \$690. For a full itinerary visit the Master Gardener website at <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/mg/events/default.cfm>
Email: mary@hiddentreasuresbotanicaltours.com

Ornamental Plant Germplasm Center

Plant genetic resources or plant germplasm are the genetically variable stock that plant breeders use to breed new crop cultivars. These genetic materials are comprised of our landraces, traditional or heirloom varieties, wild and weedy forms, related wild species, genetic stocks, inbred lines and even our modern cultivars. There are currently some 24 active seed and clonal repositories distributed throughout the country and a long-term genebank for base collection is at the National Center for Genetic Resources Preservation (NCGRP) in Fort Collins, CO.

Until recently, only food, fiber and industrial crops (more than 450,000) were preserved. However, in 2001, the Ornamental Plant Germplasm Center was established as the first center to take on the important task of preserving ornamental plant germplasm. It is located at The Ohio State University in Columbus and contains about 3,100 accessions (genetically distinct groups). These plants comprise 200 genera and 900 taxa of 850 species from 70 countries. This facility focuses on six priority genera— *Begonia*, *Coreopsis*, *Lilium*, *Phlox*, *Rudbeckia* and Old World *Phlox*. Breeders may use the germplasm to develop new plants with consumer appeal which could include novel flower colors and scents or improved drought, disease and pest tolerance. A committee from the university, industry and the government decides conservation priorities.

The germplasm is acquired by exploration or exchange and the center performs multiple management activities such as seed viability testing; cultivation in the greenhouse and the field; insect and hand-pollination; seed harvesting and processing; digital X-ray imaging for embryo evaluation; proper seed storage; monitoring of seed quality and regeneration of seed lots. Information on all the accessions in the OPGC collection may be found at <http://www.ars-grin/npgs/searchgrin.html> Sorry Master Gardeners, only researchers and plant breeders can order seed from the Ornamental Plant Germplasm Center— although many avid gardeners have tried over the years!

Illinois Master Gardener website: <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/mg>



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