



Imagine

Illinois Master Gardeners' Information,
News and Education

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May-June 2010

Coordinators Comments

Many thanks to all the Master Gardeners who attended the Extension public listening sessions this spring and expressed opinions about the value of this program. Your voices were heard by Extension administration and weighed heavily in the plans for reorganization.

There is currently much uncertainty and anxiety among staff and volunteers about the reorganization of Extension in Illinois. It has been decided however that counties will join together in 3-5 county units under one county director. Minimum staffing for these multi-county units will include a county director, 3 FTEs of educators, a secretary and a position to manage volunteers. A team comprised of myself, Sheri Seibold- Extension Specialist in Volunteer Development and 4-H; Liz Haynes-IL Master Naturalist Coordinator and Denise Levgold- Assistant Dean and Director of 4-H has been working for several months to guarantee that our volunteer programs are well placed for success after the reorganization and into the future.

Yes- you will see changes at the local level. You may find that your volunteer work involves a different office location or different educators and staff than you are used to working with. However, every effort is being made so that the Illinois Master Gardener program will continue its outstanding public service and I hope in the process of reorganization we will become stronger. Please be patient and open to change as we work through this reorganization. The staff and I truly need your support as we move forward.

2009 Master Gardener Volunteer Stats

2009 volunteer hours= 180, 990

2009 continuing education hours=45,117

Total current volunteers and interns= 3,550

Value of volunteer service= \$4.07 million

I am pleased that the volunteer hours reported have increased every year for the past 10 years!

✍️ Monica David, IL MG 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.**



Macy's Flower Show

This spring Cook County Master Gardeners served as guides and staffed a plant information booth at the Macy's Flower Show in Chicago. The picture shows a display about the show- complete with a gardener in our own Master Gardener apparel!

Important Dates

June 26: Garden Walk 2010 "Picture Perfect". Champaign, IL. 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM, rain or shine. Enjoy eight unique gardens, shop at the garden boutique and learn along the way with garden demonstrations. Tickets are \$10 in advance or \$12 the day of the event. Proceeds benefit the Master Gardener programs in Champaign County. 217-333-7672.

July 10: Garden Walk and Plant Sale. The University of Illinois Extension Master Gardeners of DeKalb County will hold their annual Garden Walk and Plant Sale from 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM, rain or shine. The gardens will be in the DeKalb-Sycamore-Kingston area, and the Plant Sale will be held at the DeKalb County Center for Agriculture. The Plant Sale will include a Garden Boutique and a Master Gardener Helpdesk. Light refreshments will be served at one of the gardens, and there will be door prizes. Tickets for the Garden Walk are \$10 in advance or \$12 the day of the event. 815-758-8194.

July 10: McHenry County Master Gardener's Garden Walk. This self-guided, day-long tour begins at 9 AM at the Master Gardeners' Demonstration Garden at McHenry County College in Crystal Lake. In addition to the demo garden, the walk features seven private gardens in the Crystal Lake/Huntley/Marengo areas and includes a wide variety of garden styles, including Trudi Temple's Marengo organic farm. The walk features a garden on a city lot, a garden with a "secret" garden, a 5 acre property of trees, veggies and flowers, a shade-loving garden, and two gardens in the Del Webb Community in Sun City. There will be plants for sale at the Demo Garden on a first come first served basis, while supplies last. Tickets are \$10 through June 25 and \$15 thereafter. Purchase tickets through the college at 815-455-8764 or at the gardens on the day of the event.

July 10-11: Galena Garden Walk. The JoDavie's Master Gardeners will host this garden walk which features eight gardens— everything from British cottage gardens to formal gardens. 10 AM to 4 PM. Tickets available onsite for \$10 with an additional \$6 upgrade to include the garden party, which takes place at a historical B & B overlooking Galena. The garden party will have drinks and entertainment as well as the opportunity to mingle with the participating garden owners. 815-541-4343.

State Master Gardener Office to Offer Two Garden Tours in 2011

The University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener Office is excited to announce two great garden trips for Master Gardeners and their guests in 2011. Final itineraries and prices will be announced in June and will be posted on the Illinois Extension Master Gardener website at <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/mg>.

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! The tentative itinerary 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. On 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; Trebah Garden; Tresco Abby Gardens on the Isles of Scilly; 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.

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 en-route to visit the Else Kientzler Botanical Garden followed by a visit to the Nectandra Cloudforest Gardens. 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. Participants of this trip will enjoy staying in ecolodges 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 books on the birds of Costa Rica.

Edamame Gaining Attention in Illinois

Edamame are creating a stir. This healthy, protein-packed, fresh vegetable fits a modern “on-the-go” lifestyle. And while the crop has been around for thousands of years, it is now gaining popularity as a “new crop” in Illinois. Edamame, also known as vegetable soybeans, are popping up in Illinois grocery stores, farmers’ markets and even in the McDonald’s Asian salad. Magazines showcase Hollywood celebrities and their children snacking on these **low-fat** beans that are nutritious and fun to eat.

“Edamame are a unique vegetable because they provide a complete protein,” said Theresa Herman, University of Illinois research specialist. “They are a great option for vegetarians or for individuals looking to decrease their consumption of meat.” Edamame, or vegetable soybeans, are a common snack food in China and Japan, where use goes back more than a thousand years.

Surprisingly enough, edamame were studied in Illinois and across the United States in the 1930s, when the search for a value-added food was a priority. Unfortunately, there was not enough time for edamame to become engrained in the culture before the post-war boom shifted the focus on soy away from human food uses to animal feed and industrial uses,” Herman said.

So, how can this old crop be a new crop for Illinois? Illinois consumers spend \$48 billion on food each year, but most of this money leaves the state. Last summer, the Illinois Food, Farms, and Jobs Act was passed to help facilitate the development of the local food system and keep more of that money in Illinois.

Some U of I researchers believe edamame is a good candidate for the expanding food production system in Illinois. “However, because it’s a new crop here, more research is needed on agronomic practices to produce edamame more efficiently at the commercial level. More information on the performance of the available commercial varieties is also needed” Herman said.

U of I soybean breeder Dick Bernard has taken a first step by crossing large-seeded Asian varieties of edamame with adapted U.S. grain varieties, resulting in a promising vegetable-type soybean, “Gardensoy,” that grows well in the United States.

Gardensoy varieties are available to home gardeners for spring planting free of charge from the National Soybean Research Center.

Downy Mildew Poses Threat to Illinois Basil Crop

Illinois basil growers are advised to be on alert for downy mildew, a destructive new disease expected to plague basil this year. University of Illinois plant pathologists first discovered this disease late last August and predict it will be an annually-occurring disease. “Illinois’s conditions are favorable for it,” said Mohammad Babadoost, U of I Extension plant pathologist. “I suspect basil downy mildew will be here for years to come based on the history of downy mildews in other crops. We are focused on doing all we can to control it.”

Basil downy mildew is caused by *Peronospora* spp. Symptoms that growers should look for include leaf spot and foliar blight. The pathogen is spread by wind, seed and plant material. The cool, wet growing season of 2009 was an ideal environment to foster it, Babadoost said.

“This disease works fast – in just a matter of days it can take over an entire crop,” Babadoost said. Currently, the best measure of protection is through chemical control, Babadoost said. Azoxystrobin (Quadris) and two phosphorous acid fungicides, ProPhyt and K-Phite, are labeled for use on basil, and studies show these products are effective against downy mildew. As well, Actinovate AG is an OMRI-listed fungicide that is labeled for use on herbs and for suppressing foliar diseases including downy mildew. “These fungicides alone are not expected to provide season-long protection against downy mildew of basil,” Babadoost said. “We are testing other fungicides on downy mildew in a commercial field in Momence to evaluate their efficacy for control of the disease.”

In addition, he encourages growers to use uncontaminated seed and less susceptible cultivars. The commonly grown sweet basil is more susceptible than other basil species. He also points out that it’s important to minimize leaf wetness and relative humidity.

This disease is new to North America. It was first reported in Africa in 1933. In 2001, it was found in Switzerland, and then it moved to Italy, Belgium and France. The first United States discovery occurred in south Florida in October 2007.

The total crop value of basil in Illinois is approximately \$10 million per year. Babadoost estimates the gross value of basil at \$10,000 to \$20,000 per acre. An average growing season has five harvests.

eXtension Master Gardener Blog is Launching May 3

Extension Master Gardener volunteers have a new communication tool to encourage interaction and sharing at the national, state and local level. Cooperative Extension Master Gardener (EMG) program coordinators are gearing up to launch the first national blog for EMG volunteers on Monday, 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>. With over 94,000 volunteers contributing more than \$100 million in service nationwide, the EMG program is hoping to take its volunteer program to a new level by increasing the social interaction of its participants.

Beginning Monday, May 3, EMG coordinators and guest contributors from various states will take turns sharing a weekly blog post on a topic geared toward the national EMG community. Master Gardeners will be encouraged to discuss items appearing in blog posts by submitting comments using the blog's commenting features.

Monica David, Illinois EMG coordinator and Consumer Horticulture National Committee chair, said, "I hope the EMG Blog will be a place where Master Gardeners are encouraged to 'talk shop.'" David also noted that the blog can be a place for EMGs to interact around blog post topics that may highlight many Master Gardener activities including:

- Project ideas, successes, and learning points
- Educational opportunities and curricula
- Contributions to the public good (value and benefit)
- National updates and events

In addition, David noted that collaboration via the EMG blog could lead to more cross-state and regional cooperation on projects and provide expanded learning opportunities for Master Gardeners. "Hopefully they will share and discuss researched-based knowledge from different land grant universities related to their

project and volunteer opportunities. Another equally important component of utilizing the EMG blog is to reach audiences who primarily use blogs and the Internet for communicating or getting information," she said.

"While we don't all grow the same plants or have all the same exact program needs, there is much to learn from each state," said Rick Durham, Kentucky EMG Coordinator and current leader of the eXtension Consumer Horticulture Community of Practice. "Maybe the EMG blog will help provide a more freely flowing river of ideas within and between states," he said.

Please help spread the word that on May 3, EMGs will be blogging live via <http://blogs.extension.org/mastergardener>

American Garden Award in it's Second Year



The American Garden Award is a unique opportunity for the gardening public to vote on a specific flower or plant that they think has the most appealing garden characteristics. Some of the world's most prestigious flower breeders have chosen their best varieties to enter into this competition. Then, in cooperation with eighteen highly respected public gardens throughout the United States (including Cantigny Gardens, Chicago Botanic Garden and the Chicago Park District), All-America Selections presents the four entries so consumers can view the plants in person, then vote for their favorite. There are a number of ways to vote: by texting a given code to a polling number, by going to www.americangardenaward.com and clicking on the voting button, by using postage-paid voting postcards located at most gardens or by becoming a fan of American Garden Award on Facebook.

The four entries are: Echinacea 'Prairie Splendor TM'; Ornamental Pepper 'Purple Flash'; Rudbeckia 'Denver Daisy' and Zinnia Profusion 'Knee-High Red'.

Voting is open May 1-August 31 and winners are announced in September. Any or all of these flowers are available at a local garden retailer.

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



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