



Imagine

Illinois Master Gardeners' Information,
News and Education

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Coordinators Comments

Social media– Facebook, Twitter, blogging and more. Some of us can't live without it and some of us won't even consider doing it– no way, no how. I keep telling everyone that I spend a majority of my days in front of a computer and I don't want to spend my leisure time glued to a screen. However– I am due to become a “blogger” very soon as I will explain shortly.

The Extension Technology Team recently ran workshops for staff on using social media as part of our jobs. Many staff do an excellent job with blogs or Facebook pages and this has become an excellent way to reach clients in many counties. Some of these blogs feature information for and about Master Gardeners. Ron Welford's blog in Cook County is an excellent example– check it out at web.extension.illinois.edu/cook/blogs/eb6/index.html The important thing to remember about these blogs is that they are sponsored by the U of I Extension and they contain accurate research-based information. They reach a large audience and help to promote our programming efforts.

A new national Extension Master Gardener blog is in the works and will hopefully be released in early May. The blog will be administered by state Master Gardener Coordinators and it will be hosted on the eXtension website. I have written about eXtension in past newsletters and hope that many of you have had a chance to visit the site at <http://www.extension.org> . eXtension is an Internet-based collaborative environment where Land Grant University content providers exchange objective, research-based knowledge to solve real challenges in real time. eXtension is unlike any other search engine or information-based website. It's a space where university content providers can gather and produce new educational and information resources on wide-ranging topics. It is also where the national Master Gardener website is housed. I will notify you when this national blog becomes active so that you can see it and respond to the posted topics.

Another issue related to social media is the use of

personal blogs and Facebook pages. As I was researching this article– I visited several Facebook pages and personal blogs– including several which are hosted by folks who call themselves Master Gardeners. Some of the gardening information on these sites was good (i.e. research-based) and some was not. Now I am not sure if these folks ARE truly Master Gardeners but when they claim they are and then they post poor gardening advice– they give us all a “black eye”. The state MG advisory committee recently discussed this very issue. We are in agreement that University of Illinois Master Gardeners should not use their title when they post comments on a personal blog. This is no different than our policies which require that you do not use your title except when participating in an Extension sponsored program. So please keep in mind that you can blog to your hearts content– but please don't use your title of University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener or Illinois Master Gardener when you are using your personal social media. These titles are covered by our service mark which protects the integrity of our program.

 Monica David, MG State Coordinator

MG Apparel Now on Sale

The University of Illinois Extension Master Gardener merchandise is now available to order. Master Gardener apparel is a great way to show your pride and promote your local Extension projects. Check the sell sheet which accompanies your newsletter to pick out your items. All ordering will be done via the internet (through the Master Gardener website at <http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/mg> on the “News and Updates” page). Credit cards and checks can be accepted. All apparel will be shipped to your local extension office for pickup in late May.

Most items include an embroidered logo except for the T-shirts, long sleeve T-shirts and ladies tank tops which feature a screen printed logo. Please choose carefully as all sales are final and there are no extra items ordered for exchanges.

The last day to order apparel is April 8th.

No late orders will be accepted!

Important Dates

March 20: Gardener's Day, Western IL University Student Union, Macomb, IL. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Sessions will include Cut Flowers; Summer and Fall Blooming Vines; Trees and Shrubs; Diseases of Flowers; Composting; Ferns; Small Space Vegetable Gardening and more. Cost is \$35 and includes lunch, handouts, door prizes and vendors. Sponsored by the McDonough County MGs. 309-837-3939.

March 20: Gardeners Day, U of I Extension Bld., IL State Fairgrounds, Springfield, IL. Registration starts at 8:00 a.m. with the first seminar at 8:45 a.m. Nine one-hour seminars will be offered in three sessions by U of I Extension specialists and local horticulture experts. Topics include: Creating a Haven for Birds; Terrific Trees; Spring Tune-up for Your Yard; Native Plants; Prune it Right; Small Fruits for the Home Landscape and more. Presented by the Sangamon-Menard Unit MGs. Registration fee is \$10 in advance (before March 12) and \$12 at the door.
www.extension.uiuc.edu/sangamonmenard.

March 26-27: Garden Day-Spring into Gardening, I Hotel and Conference Center, Champaign, IL. March 26th will be a workshop focusing on Landscape Design and Art in the Garden by Kaizad Irani. March 27th features Joe Lamp'1 from PBS TV; Rosalind Creasy on Edible Landscaping; Dianne Noland on Using Natives in the Flower Border; Dave Wanninger on Shrub Selection; chef Ben Lubchansky on Cooking and Growing Spring Veggies and Janet Macunovich and Steven Nikkila on Looks and Lessons in Garden Design. Friday only- \$50; Saturday only-\$80 and both days for \$120. Sponsored by the Champaign County MGs. Call 217-333-7672 or www.extension.uiuc.edu/champaign

March 27: Gardening Insights, Lutheran School Association, Decatur, IL. The keynote address given by Trudi Temple will be "Order and Creativity in the Garden". Fifteen breakout sessions will be offered on a range of topics including Must-have Plants for the Garden; Edible Arrangements; Small Fruits; Summer Bulbs; Rain Barrels; Weed Control; Stained Glass Stepping Stones; Water Gardens; Urban Trees and Native Species for Butterfly and Hummingbird Gardens. A cost of \$20 includes the keynote session and classes. Lunch at an additional cost. A succulent and herb sale and an "Ask the Master Gardener" desk will be offered. Sponsored by the Macon County MGs. 217-877-6042.

April 8: April in Paris, Edgar County 4-H Fairgrounds, Paris, IL. Classes include Daylilies 101 by Rod Kroemer, Five Acre Farm; Understanding Monarch Butterflies by Kay Henrichs and Karen Gottlieb and Birdscaping by the "Bird Lady"- Sharon Sorenson. Judie Fair from WDWS radio will answer questions as the "Plant Doctor for the Day". Cost is \$15 plus a \$5 lunch donation. Sponsored by the Edgar County MGs. 217-465-8585 or www.extension.uiuc.edu/edgar

April 10: Gardenfest, McHenry County College, Crystal Lake, IL. Trudi Temple will be the keynote speaker and she will present "Order and Creativity in the Garden". Other speakers include Greg Stack and Bruce Spangenburg as well as several Master Gardeners. Classes include an all day basic gardening class, as well as Ornamental Grasses; Roses, Houseplants; Small Fruits and Weed ID and Control. Cost is \$40. Sponsored by the McHenry County MGs. Call Amy at 815-455-8764.

Fall France Garden Trip

Four spots remain for the fall garden trip to France. The trip is scheduled for September 20 to October 1st, 2010. France in the fall will be highlighted by warm sunny days with gardens full of roses, asters, dahlias, rudbeckias, cosmos, other late summer perennials and a full palate of annuals as well as lovely kitchen gardens. Destinations for this trip include stops on the French Riviera to view the Princess Grace Rose Garden in Monaco, Serre de la Madone, Villa



Val Rahmeh and Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild. The group will then move on to Eze, Arles, Aix en Provence and Avignon to view historic sites, gardens and markets. The bullet train will take the group to Paris with free time to explore the city. Finally the group will visit five famous chateau gardens and Giverny in the Loire Valley. Chateau gardens include Chateau Chenonceaux, Chateau Villandry and Chateau Chantilly. The complete itinerary is posted on the Master Gardener website at:

<http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/mg/events/>

Please contact Robyn Gulstrom as soon as possible to hold your spot (rgulstrom@comcast.net or 269-629-9249).

Upper Midwest Conference to Feature Outstanding Tours

The Upper Midwest Master Gardener Conference is only six months away! Mark your calendars to join volunteers from Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota and Iowa on September 16-18 in Rockford, IL. This conference will offer excellent speakers, rewarding tours and the opportunity to network with MGs from four states.

Check the MG website later this month for more information: <http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/mg/>

Here is a synopsis of the tours—there is sure to be one to match everyone's interests!

Tour 1—The Prairie State (all day)

Tour stops include the Nachusa Grasslands with eight different natural community types and 600 native plant species. The second stop is the popular John Deere Historic Site—a friendly 19th century prairie village. Last up is the Tim Lewis Landscape—a model for using native plants in the home landscape.

Tour 2—Local Foods—A Growing Trend (all day)

This tour will feature local food producers in Stephenson County. Participants will enjoy stops at Harrison Market Garden/Beyer's U-Pick; Phil's Honey Farm; Famous Fossil Winery; Cedar Creek Organics and Miller's Country Cheese.

Tour 3—Conservation and Development (all day)

Join this group to view conservation areas such as the Boone County Distillery Area, Kinnikinnick Creek and Piscasaw Fen. The tour also includes heritage and rain gardens, the Roger D. Gustafson Nature Center and MG demo gardens and a raptor program.

Tour 4—Glorious Gardens (half day)

This tour features the Sinnessissippi Rose Garden, the world famous Anderson Japanese Garden and the Wesley Willow Community Garden.

Tour 5—Glorious Gardens (half day)

Don't miss this one! This group will head to the Rotary Gardens in Janesville, WI and then tour the Rosecrance Healing Garden.

Tour 6—Glorious Gardens (half day)

Three beautiful gardens in one tour—the Anderson Japanese Garden, La Paloma and the Midway Village Museum.

Tour 7—Glorious Gardens (half day)

This group will visit the popular Klehm Arboretum and the Tinker Swiss Cottage Museum and Gardens.

Tour 8—Early Morning Birding

If you are an early riser and love birds—this trip is for you. The Boone County Conservation District will guide us as we look for birds of prey and herons along the Kishwaukee river.

See you all in September in Rockford!

North Central States MG IPM Survey Results

In 2009, the North Central Consumer Horticulture Working Group developed and distributed a 14 question survey to determine North Central States Extension Master Gardener's (MG) knowledge and use of Integrated Pest Management (IPM). The online survey was completed by 3,852 MGs in Illinois, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Dakota, Nebraska, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin. 3,842 MGs, or 16.7% of the 22,916 MGs in the North Central region completed the survey. Roughly 41% of the final sample came from Michigan (25.8%) and Illinois (16.2%).

MGs indicated they grow flowers, 99.7%, followed by trees and shrubs 98%, lawn 95%, vegetables 82% and fruits 49%. The pests managed by respondents were weeds 62%, diseases 52%, insects 47%, and wildlife 28%. Relationships between the types of pests managed by MG respondents were found. Correlations between pest management activities indicated that those who manage one pest type are more likely to manage others.

MGs indicated they engaged in a range of IPM practices including prevention, monitoring, cultural, and chemical controls. However, 81% indicated a need for more training in identifying diseases, and 65% say they needed more training in identifying insects. Only 16% indicated that they had received advanced pest management training within the past 5 years, however these MGs had higher mean scores for confidence, and prevention, monitoring, and cultural awareness/control practices than those that had not participated in advanced training. Years of experience as an active MG and confidence in knowledge using IPM-related garden activities were correlated positively, indicating this is a significant difference among experienced MG and new or inexperienced MGs.

MGs indicated their primary concerns for choosing pest management practices were: effectiveness 79%, health and safety to family or pets 79%, and environmental impact 74%, as opposed to cost of the management method 20%, or amount of time needed to use 9%.

MGs also indicated their preference for learning resources. Extension pest management updates and tips (73%), instructor led face to face classes (72%) and online fact sheets (70%) had the highest responses. Web tools (63%) were viewed as very helpful resources, while self paced or instructor led online classes were viewed as somewhat to very helpful.

USDA Working to Develop More Nutritious Food Aid Packages

Roger Beachy, director of USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) recently announced a new grant program to develop healthier food products for humanitarian assistance programs. "Millions of people around the world depend on food aid delivered by the United States for their survival every day," Beachy said. "It is our responsibility to make sure that in emergency situations, these people are receiving food that supplies them with the nutrients they need." NIFA's Food Aid Nutritional Education Program (FANEP) supports the development and field testing of new ready-to-use foods, fortified blended foods, high-energy foods, micronutrient powders or other food products designed to improve the nutritional delivery and functional form of humanitarian food assistance. Projects funded by FANEP may also field test existing food products that have not yet been approved for use in food aid programs.

All America Selections Display Gardens in Illinois

Alwerdt's Gardens	Altamont
Garfield Park Conservatory	Chicago
U of I Extension- Ag High School	Chicago
Richland Community College	Decatur
Illinois Central College	East Peoria
Chicago Botanic Garden	Glencoe
Mabery Gelvin Botanical Garden	Mahomet
Kishwaukee College	Malta
Triton College Botanical Garden	River Grove
Salem Memorial Garden	Salem
Washington Park Botanical Garden	Springfield
U of I Arboretum	Urbana
Cantigny Gardens	Wheaton

Green Education Foundation and Green Thumb Challenge

The Green Education Foundation (GEF) is a non-profit organization that provides environmental education resources for Pre K-12 classrooms and youth groups nationwide. GEF believes that what is healthy for the environment is healthy for kids, and promotes learning opportunities that develop sustainable habits of environmental stewardship in children and their communities. GEF couples standards-based curricula with active participation, acknowledging that children learn best through hands-on activities that enhance their critical thinking skills.

GEF's National Green Week mobilizes hundreds of students each year to participate in eco-challenges that empower school communities to achieve measurable and sustainable goals in waste reduction and energy conservation. Students can choose *any* week from Feb 1 to April 13th to participate in GEF eco-friendly programs such as Waste-Free Snacks or the Green Energy Challenge. These hands-on projects challenge schools, clubs and organizations to take on a green initiative such as planting a school garden or reducing energy. GEF provides all the educational materials including standards based lessons which can easily be incorporated into science, math, social studies, language arts and fine arts curriculum. Visit the website at www.GreenEducationFoundation.org for more information and the downloadable lessons.

The Green Thumb Challenge (Feb 1 to August 31)

GEF is launching the largest youth gardening initiative in history, calling on Pre K-12 schools and youth groups to plant 10,000 indoor or outdoor gardens in the spring and summer of 2010. Check www.greenthumbchallenge.org for checklists for school approvals, plot location guidelines, container gardening tips, funding sources, vegetable and flower suggestions and more. There is also a multitude of lessons. All participants must register and receive \$10 off a \$50 purchase at Lowes and the opportunity to be awarded a \$5,000 grant for their school. GEF is working with the state and national MG offices to enlist Master Gardeners to help schools with these projects. More information on how to participate will be sent out to your local Coordinators very soon.

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



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