



Imagine

Illinois Master Gardeners' Information,
News and Education

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Coordinators Comments

Spring is just around the corner and soon (hopefully) it will be time to plant the garden. With the high price of gas and food, unemployment, youth obesity problems and the demand for local food– it's time to reflect on the community garden movement.

Community gardens have been traditional in Europe since the early nineteenth century. As early as 1819 in England "allotments" were set aside for the urban working class. Community gardening in the US dates back to the early 18th century, when Moravians created a community garden near Winston-Salem N.C. First nations people also gardened with this approach for generations before the arrival of immigrants. In the late 1800's when cities in the US were growing rapidly and many were out of work, cities began the Potato Patch Movement, offering garden plots to the poor so they could grow their own food. The government recruited citizens to grow Liberty Gardens in the early 1900s so that Americans could contribute to the war effort. In the 1930s during the Great Depression, relief gardens were promoted to improve people's spirits and provide work and food. When the US entered World War II, the government launched a Victory Garden campaign and by 1944 20 million Victory Gardens produced 44% of the fresh vegetables. From the late 1960's to the present, community gardens have helped to improve neighborhoods, express cultural traditions and grow food.

Has your Master Gardener group considered joining the movement and perhaps providing education to potential gardeners? Today the American Community Gardening Association (<http://communitygarden.org/>) is a leader in promoting this movement. Check out their website for great information and resources to get you started.

✍ Monica David, IL Master Gardener Coordinator

MG Merchandise 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 will be accepted. All apparel will be shipped to your local Extension office for pickup in late May.

Apparel items will be embroidered with the MG logo except for the T-shirts, tank tops, long sleeve T-shirts, ladies 3/4 T-shirt and the stadium blanket which will have screen printed logos. Unisex sizes are basically men's sizes. The ladies button hoodie fleece and breeze vest run small so you may want to order a size larger.

The last day to order apparel is April 11th.

No late orders will be accepted!

EMG National Blog

Have you noticed this badge on the Master Gardener webpage? This badge will link you directly to the national Extension Master Gardener Blog. Recent posts include information about the National Arbor Day Foundation and National Arbor Day Farm in Nebraska City, NE and recent updates on Host X Virus from the University of Minnesota. Check out this site for information about important topics as well as MG projects in other states.

Discover what's
happening across
the nation. More...



Important Dates

March 5: Gardening for Food and Fun, NIU, Rockford, IL. The keynote speaker Ed Lyons, Director of the Allen Centennial Garden at UW Madison, will present “Changing Trends in Gardening Today: Ornamental Edibles”. Attendees may choose from several educational sessions. Fee is \$40 with lunch. Sponsored by the Winnebago Co. MGs. 815-986-4357.

March 5: Gardener’s Palette, Quincy, IL. Mike McGrath, host of the nationally syndicated Public Radio show, “You Bet Your Garden” will be the keynote speaker. Breakout sessions will be offered. Sponsored by the Adams-Brown County MGs. 217-223-8380 or <http://www.extension.illinois.edu/adams>.

March 5: Home, Lawn and Garden Day, Central Catholic High School, Bloomington, IL. The \$40 registration fee includes keynote address, choice of several breakout sessions, exhibitors, door prizes and lunch. Sponsored by the McLean Co. MGs. 309-663-8306 or <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/mclean>

March 5: Gardeners Big Day, Spoon River College, Canton, IL. 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. A wide array of great topics includes Low Maintenance Perennials; EAB, Bulb Basics; Herb and Floral Designs to Music; Soil Science Basics; Hypertufa, Backyard Viticulture and more. \$23 fee includes lunch. Sponsored by Spoon River College and Garden Club and Fulton Co. MGs. To register go to <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/fulton/> or 309-647-6260.

March 12: Spring Garden Seminar, IL Valley Community College, Oglesby, IL. There will be 16 breakout classes over four sessions including sessions on Winter Tree ID, Vines, Container Gardening, Composting, Pruning, Native Plants, Edible Plants, Lawn Weeds, Medicinal Herbs and much more. Keynote speaker is Drew Effron from Ball Seed who will speak on “Keeping Gardening Relevant in the Decade Ahead”. Cost is \$35 and covers workshops, keynote address, exhibitors, breakfast, lunch, door prizes and a Q and A booth. Sponsored by the LaSalle Co. MGs. 815-433-0707 or <http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/lasalle>.

March 12: Weekend Gardener, Gateway Convention Center, Collinsville, IL. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. This annual event features 16 different breakout topics. Speakers include Extension educators, local garden business owners and Master Gardeners. Registration is \$40 and includes lunch. Sponsored by the Madison-St. Clair Co. MGs. For more information call 618-236-4172.

March 14–April 18: Spring Home Horticulture Series, Rock Island Co. Extension Office, Milan, IL. Six consecutive Monday evenings from 7 to 9 p.m. Topics include: Seed Saving; Putting Water into Your Garden; Preserving Your Own Food; Micro-climates; Herbs and What’s New in the Greenhouse. \$5 per session or \$20 for the series. 309-756-9978.

March 19: Gardener’s Day, Western IL University Student Union, Macomb, IL. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Cost is \$35 and includes a wide choice of break-out sessions, lunch, handouts, door prizes and vendors. Sponsored by the McDonough Co. MGs. 309-837-3939.

March 19: Ready, Set, Grow Gardening 2011, Sauk Valley Community College, Dixon Il. 9 a.m. to 3:15 p.m. Monica David will give the keynote address “Using Italian and Irish Garden Elements in Your Own Backyard”. Eleven different workshops ranging from Plant Diseases; Photographing Nature; Roses; Heirloom Seed Starting; Container Gardening; Propagation and more. The fee is \$35 and includes lunch and handouts. Sponsored by the Ogle, Lee and Whiteside Co. MGs. 815-772-4075 or www.extension.uiuc.edu/whiteside to register.

March 26: Spring Garden Symposium, Rotary Botanical Gardens, Janesville, WI. Talks feature Jeff Epping on “Small Trees with Big Impact”; Ed Lyon on “Stunning Plants in Limited-Space Gardens”, Doreen Howard with “Heirloom Edibles for Containers and Small Spaces” and Mark Dwyer “Landscape Design Tips for the Smaller Garden”. \$40 for certified MGs/\$50 public. Call 608-754-1779 or visit www.rotarybotanicalgardens.org.

April 8: Outdoor Living Extravaganza, Milwaukee Zoo, Milwaukee, WI. 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sponsored by Proven Winners. Kerry Meyer from Proven Winners will speak on “Only the Best for Your Garden”; Melinda Myers on “Small Space Gardens”; Tim Wood from Spring Meadow Nursery will speak on “The Hunt for New Plants” and P. Allen Smith will talk on “Creating Beauty: Stunning Solutions for Every Garden”. \$80 includes talks, lunch and gift bag. www.provenwinners.com or 877-865-5818.

April 9: Gardenfest, McHenry County College, Crystal Lake, IL. Terra Brockman will be the keynote and will present “Your Choices: Changing the World One Meal at a Time”. Classes include Mushroom Propagation; Climbers and Twiners; The Green Kitchen; Beekeeping; Preserving the Harvest and more. Cost is \$40 (includes lunch). Co-sponsored by McHenry Co. College and McHenry Co. MGs. For a flier and registration form go to <http://www.mchenry.edu/gardenfest/index.asp>

Annual State Conference to be Held on Campus July 7-8

Plans are nearing completion for the 2011 Illinois Master Gardener conference to be held July 7 and 8th on campus in Urbana. Master Gardeners from Champaign, McLean and Coles counties have chosen “*Back to Our Roots*” as the conference theme to reflect the conference goal of reconnecting MGs with university faculty and their research and teaching.

Each day of the conference will feature tours of Hort-related sites in the mornings and lectures by faculty and specialists in the afternoons.

Six different morning tour options are in the works:

Hort Tour– This tour includes stops at the Idea Garden, the Hartley Display Gardens and Arboretum, the Japanese House and the Pollinarium.

Greenhouse Tour– Visit the research and teaching greenhouses on campus as well as the conservatory, and the Herbarium where plants are collected and preserved.

Natural Areas Tour– This group will visit prairie, woodland and buffer areas at Trelease and Brownfield Woods while learning about natives and restoration.

Allerton Park Tour– Visit the formal gardens, sculptures, natural areas and interpretative trails on this 1,500 acre estate owned by the University of Illinois.

Sustainability Tour– This group will learn about the research efforts on grasses and trees at the Energy Farm, visit the Student Farm where produce is raised for campus.

Tree Identification Walk– Join professor Gary Kling on a tree identification walk around campus.

Classes will be offered on Thursday and Friday afternoons on campus. Attendees will be able to choose 2 sessions each day.

Thursday July 7

Children in Nature– Andrea Faber Taylor

Chocolate Lab– Bob Skirvin

Native Landscaping– Ashley Bennett

Hot Perennials and Annuals– Mary Ann Metz

Disease Diagnosis– Suzanne Bissonnette and
Stephanie Porter

Friday July 8

Urban Agriculture– Sarah Taylor Lovell

Wildlife/ Attracting Birds– Mike Ward

Small Fruits/Grapes– Bob Skirvin

Insects Pest Management– Phil Nixon

Plant Propagation– Margaret Norton

Registration, parking and tour departures will take place from the Hawthorne Suites by Marriott near campus. The Hawthorne Suites has a block of rooms reserved at a conference rate of \$70/ night. The annual awards banquet and silent auction will be held at the Hawthorne Suites on the evening of July 7th.

Full registration materials will be available by mid to late April. All registration will be done online. Watch for updates via email as information will be sent to the MG Coordinators and posted on the state website.

News from IDNR

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources is not just for hunters and fishermen! Visit their educational website at <http://dnr.state.il.us/education/> for information about workshops, classes, educational materials, online resources, native plants. IDNR also sponsors grants such as the Schoolyard Habitat Action grant or the Illinois Rain Garden Initiative. Here is a sampling of activities offered by IDNR.

Illinois Invasive Species Awareness Month

May is Illinois Invasive Species Awareness Month. If you are planning an event to educate the public about any invasive species in the state, please visit the Web site at www.illinoisinvasives.org to register it. The Web page will help to make many people aware of your program and possibly increase attendance.

ENTICE Workshop Registration

Register soon for ENTICE (Environment and Nature Training Institute for Conservation Education) educator workshops from the IDNR.

Visit <http://www.enticeworkshops.com> and enroll now! You won't want to miss the background information, supplemental resources, networking with other educators and the opportunity to work with natural resources professionals.

Upcoming workshops are listed below.

April 30, 2011 *Prairie School Gardening*, Chicago Botanic Garden, Glencoe

May 21, 2011 *Illinois Butterflies*, Peggy Notebaert Nature Museum, Chicago

June 18, 2011 *Identifying Trees and Making Leaf Collections*, The Morton Arboretum, Chicago

Enjoy the Wonders of Winter at Volo Bog State Natural Area and Moraine Hills State Park

Reservations are requested for most programs (and required for some). View the offerings at the IDR website. To make a reservation, phone 815-344-1294 or email dnr.volobog@illinois.gov

Study on Urban Soil Lead in Chicago Community Gardens

University of Illinois Masters student Laura Witzling, associate professor Michelle Wander and Extension educator Ellen Phillips and have just published a study about "Testing and educating on urban soil lead: A Case of Chicago Community Gardens" in the *Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems and Community Development* (January 2011).

The study goals were to learn how much lead is present in participating gardens in the study; to determine if lead levels vary in different types of garden areas and to inform participants and urban gardeners about soil quality and how to deal with urban gardening issues such as lead, soil fertility and soil pH.

Ten gardens participated in the study and soil cores were taken from raised and non-raised beds used to grow food and also in areas such as playgrounds and pathways. Then the researchers grew lettuce on the soils and tested the crops for quantity of lead.

Lead levels in most gardens were not a concern. Most of the garden plots contained excessive fertility with raised beds containing more phosphorus and potassium than non raised garden spaces. The lack of soil testing among the 10 gardens in the study is likely a contributing factor to the over fertilization of the gardens. Use of raised beds significantly reduced lead levels and therefore less potential risk of lead ingestions from plant uptake. Higher lead levels in soil from adjacent areas supported the notion that areas with bare soil adjacent to gardens may be an equal or greater source of risk. None of the lettuce shoots in this study exceeded the World Health Organization recommendations.

Additionally, a training program about urban garden safety with live and online options was created and evaluated by questionnaires given to Master Gardeners. Both live-trained and online trained groups' quiz scores improved significantly after the trainings, demonstrating that education about urban soil management can be effective.

The complete article plus a short handout on the Chicago Garden Project study results may be found on the Illinois Master Gardener website at <http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/mg> on the "News and Updates" page.

2011 International MG Conference

Color it Green in a Wild & Wonderful Way

Registration is NOW OPEN for the 2011 International Master Gardener Conference to be held October 11-14 in Charleston, West VA. The Early Bird registration fee is \$250 (by June 9th). After June 9 the registration fee is \$300.

Conference lodging is available at several hotels which are within walking distance of the convention center, historic downtown, shops and the million square foot town center mall. All hotels except the Fairfield offer airport shuttles. To register for the conference and for information about hotels go to <http://imgc.ext.wvu.edu>

Several pre and post conference tours are available.

Heritage and Horticulture Tour October 8 – 11
The Heritage Tour will feature some of West Virginia's finest arts and crafts, such as the art of blowing glass, quilting and rug hooking, as well as some history of the western frontier.

Northern Panhandle Tour October 9 – 11
This tour will travel north to the city of Wheeling in West Virginia's northern panhandle. This is the northern most part of the state where the terrain has no real mountains and land is level along the mighty Ohio River.

Historic Eastern Panhandle Tour October 9 – 11
The Historic Eastern Panhandle was the first region of West Virginia to be settled and is steeped in history. Situated between the Blue Ridge Mountains and the Allegheny Plateau, the rolling hills, long ridges and valleys of this region can easily be described as "Almost Heaven, West Virginia." This area is most noted for its American Civil War experience and for its beautiful orchards.

Allegheny Highlands Tour October 14-16
Fall is the best time to see the beautiful forest of West Virginia! This post-conference tour travels through West Virginia's beautiful highlands, where there are more designated wilderness areas than traffic lights. You'll be traveling through the 800,000 acre Monongahela National Forest during the majority of this tour.

Southern West Virginia Tour October 14-16
Join the group to travel to a lovely vineyard and participate in a wine tasting at the award-winning Daniel Vineyards. Visit an exhibition garden featuring herbs, vegetables, flowers, a high tunnel, and a children's' garden created by local Master Gardeners. Take a hike through a botanic area supporting unique plant material. Tour the local sustainable farm of Pam and Kirk West and much more!

K-State Study Supports Claims of Fabric Softener Sheets Repelling Insects

A new study suggests there may be some truth to claims by gardeners that tucking Bounce® sheets in your pocket keeps the insects away.

While some gardeners may have been using this antidote for years, experiments by researchers at Kansas State University and the University of Illinois revealed scientific evidence that Bounce® fabric softener dryer sheets either directly or indirectly repel adult fungus gnats under laboratory conditions.

The study was conducted over the last two years and was designed to determine the repellent activity of Bounce® fabric softener dryer sheets and to isolate and identify the volatile components of the sheets. In five separate experiments, the mean proportion of fungus gnat adults was significantly less in samples with the dryer sheets added, ranging from 12 % to 18 %, whereas those sample compartments without dryer sheets contained 33% to 48% of the fungus gnats released in the study area.

Analyses showed a major component of the sheets to be linalool, which is found naturally in some plants such as lavender and basil. Though it is toxic to several mite and insect pests, little is known of its ability to repel insects.

Raymond Cloyd, professor, K-State's Department of Entomology, decided to pursue the study after hearing claims by two gardeners and a colleague that Bounce® sheets repel insects. Cloyd said it is too early to foresee the effects this study may have on gardening or production practices since they still don't know the longevity of the repellency or how far away insects can be repelled. "We would like to do a greenhouse study with either the Bounce® fabric softener or the oils we've been working with."

The results of the study were published in December 2010 in HortScience magazine.

Introduction to Diagnostics for Master Gardeners - Online Module

Introduction to Diagnostics for Master Gardener Volunteers: Approaches to Plant Pest Diagnostics is a new online module available for Extension Master Gardeners through eXtension.

Sponsored by the North Central Consumer Horticulture working group (a group of extension specialists and Master Gardener coordinators from the twelve states in the North Central region), this course is now available for Extension Master Gardeners to take as continuing education for a \$10 fee. It is a self-paced course and Master Gardeners have ten weeks to complete the course. Participants will earn a certificate for 3 hours of continuing education credits when the course is complete (check with your local Extension Master Gardener coordinator to suggest that they include this class for education hours in the Illinois volunteer reporting database.)

Denise Ellsworth and Sarah Ellis of Ohio State University have assembled this course on behalf of the North Central Consumer Horticulture working group to offer Extension Master Gardeners some guided help to enhance their plant diagnostics skills. The course has several course components:

- Narrated PowerPoint presentations
- Handouts
- Fact sheets
- Certificate worth 3 continuing education credits (upon completion)

Visit the eXtension website, campus.extension.org and set up an account using the "Create an account" link on the left side of the page. It's free, easy and secure. Once you have that account created (you will receive an e-mail with confirmation and a password), log into the eXtension site, scroll through the available course categories and select Master Gardener. Then select "Introduction to Diagnostics," and pay for the course (\$10). Once payment is complete, you can view the

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



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