



newsletter for Champaign County Master Gardeners

the cultivator



What's Growin' On by Carolyn Ogen

What a great success we scored with our Garden Walk. It was a little on the warm side, but not sweltering, and we had a super crowd of attendees enjoying all the lovely gardens. Business was brisk for the vendors, I hear, and our beautiful Idea Garden looked incredible. Many thanks to all the efforts of our co-chairs, Jana Waite and Traci Lipps, the IG chairs, and the many other committee chairs and volunteers who worked so hard all year on this project. And, as always, we couldn't do it without the generosity of the homeowners who share their gardens. Thank you to all.

Planning is already underway for next year's event. Meetings are held the first Tuesday of each month at 1 p.m. in the Extension conference room. Join in!

Registration has begun for the 2009 State Master Gardener Conference which will be held in Effingham September 10, 11, and 12. Holly Schimizu, Director of the U.S. Botanic Garden, will present the keynote address, *Backyard Bounty*. Complete information on the conference program can be accessed online.

The Nominating Committee for this year, Judy Fraker (Chair), Mary Morris, and Mary Ellen Domer have begun their work of preparing a slate of officers for 2010. Please contact them if you have suggestions of candidates or would be interested in serving in an office yourself.

We will be enjoying every minute we can of our summer weather with two great programs coming up. On Tuesday, August 18 at 7 p.m., Jan Fisher will welcome us to her garden for a lighting lesson: Touchstone Lighting will demonstrate the techniques of highlighting garden landscapes. There'll be ice cream, too! The sign-up deadline is August 10 so there's no time to waste. *(continued next page)*

august/september 2009

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign College of Agricultural,
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What's Growin' On (continued)

How about a walk and a picnic in the park? We'll have a picnic box dinner followed by a tree identification stroll led by our own tree guru, Sandy Mason. The event will be held on Tuesday, September 15 at 6 p.m. at Hessel Park on Kirby Avenue in Champaign. There is a fee of \$10 for dinner with a sign-up deadline of September 8.

The Farmers' Market at Lincoln Square in Urbana provides a chance each Saturday to earn some volunteer hours and at the same time shop for dinner and greet friends! Sign up for some time at our booth.

And...kudos to the Midwest Hosta Society on the successful conference held last month in Champaign-Urbana! A number of our own MGs worked for the success of this event: Bev Cotter, Mary Ann Metz, Mary Morris, Siska Kallio, Diann Thoma, Ruth Walker, Judy Fraker, Carol McClure, Wilma O'Brien, Carolyn Purcell, and Barb Socha.

Mid-Summer Idea Garden Update and a Request

The garden is bursting with color. If you've not visited lately, do stop by and enjoy the spectacle. Be sure to stroll all the way around the borders as well as through the interior gardens. And don't overlook the interns' annual color garden or the rose garden, or the rejuvenated berries patch. All have benefitted from the July rain and careful MG/intern deadheading and weeding.

Unfortunately, our beautiful garden has also attracted the attention of a few vandals who have dug up plants and departed with them. This has been reported to the campus police, who have asked us to call their non-emergency number, now posted at the shed, to report any further incidents.

PLEASE WEAR YOUR NAME BADGE WHEN AT THE GARDEN. If you forget to bring yours with you, there are temporary badges in the shed. If you have lost yours, you may order a new one at the Extension office (\$5 fee). No one except MGs and interns should be working in the garden, moving plants, picking vegetables and flowers, or gathering seeds.

We hope you will put **Saturday morning, August 29**, on your calendar now and join us for a special late summer "Save the Garden" work day and, at 9:00 am, a **garden chat** about seed gathering.

Midwest Prairie Hosta Society's Convention

By Dixie Smith Jackson

With some misgivings, I registered to attend the June 11-13 Midwest Regional Hosta Society Convention. Would I feel like an impostor? I'm not a member of the Society, and I have only a dozen hostas in my entire garden.

But it was a wonderful event for a hosta novice. Sure I was surrounded by hosta connoisseurs who chatted knowingly about cultivars and sports among the hundreds of hostas in their gardens. Many entered hostas to be judged and displayed in the convention's leaf show. But the event offered valuable information and a bumper crop of inspiration for gardeners like me, too.

A Thursday evening cocktail party and highly entertaining and informative seminar on arranging flowers from one's own garden opened the conference. It was set in one of the most meticulously maintained gardens I've ever visited. Showcasing dozens of hosta, complementary conifers, and other carefully chosen plants, the garden was a delightful place to spend the evening. Friday featured seminars ranging from Sandy Mason's exploration of strategies for saving our backs as we garden to Mary Ann Metz's insights into growing peonies. There was also a photo tour by Jim Bier featuring Japanese Gardening and a British hosta authority's show featuring English gardens. A Hort professor from Illinois Central College introduced his 25 favorite plants, and a plant pathologist from Agdia, Inc. discussed viral diseases that attack hosta. During breaks, we browsed a large sales area where both local and out-of-state vendors offered more hosta varieties than I'd ever dreamed of, other plants, yard ornaments, books, and a variety of other items of interest to gardeners. There was also time to admire the hundreds of entrants in the hosta leaf show.

Saturday we boarded buses at 7:00 AM for visits to six local gardens planted with stunning hostas and brimming with inspiration. The gardens' owners and the friendly hosta pros on the tour readily shared growing tips and other information with novices like me. The tour ended with a luncheon barbecue at Country Arbors Nursery. Then all three busloads of convention goers shopped for plants.

Although I had to skip the convention's evening dinners to go home and rest an injured back, I got my money's worth and more from the three-day event. I have ideas galore about which hostas to add to my garden and where to plant them. When the next convention rolls around, I'll be there — and I urge other hosta novices to join me.

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Light Up the Night

Yes, we are literally going to light up the night. The program committee has put together a fun night for you and your guest. On **August 18**, we will sponsor our wonderful **ice-cream party** in Jan Fisher's garden. Ice cream will be served at 7:00 that eve and at 7:30 we will have our speaker Bart Boewe from TouchStone Accent Lighting. He will be talking to us about ways you can best illuminate your garden with a talk, and a video showing illumination. Then, when the sensors say it is time, Jan's garden will come alive with a "light show". Yes, it is beautiful! He has half of it done at this point and I can't say enough about the effect! This definitely is one program you will not want to miss! (Directions to Jan's house will be given on our site nearer time for this event.) Please call the office to sign-up 333-7672.

Miscanthus as a Clean Energy Source

Teleconference on Monday, August 31

Energy drives just about everything in our daily lives . . . from the electricity that runs our televisions and computers, to the way we heat our homes, schools and businesses. As energy concerns continue to mount, researchers are looking to the soil for one possible answer.

Miscanthus giganteus, a perennial grass crop, is being grown, studied and used in Illinois and around the world as an alternative energy source for heat and electricity. The tremendous amount of biomass that *Miscanthus* can generate in a few short years has drawn the interest of researchers, farmers and landowners.

University of Illinois Extension is presenting the teleconference *From Field to Furnace: Miscanthus as a Bioenergy Crop*. Potential growers and interested community members are invited to hear about the logistics of growing and using this perennial grass crop for energy. The program will be held at 1:30 p.m. at the Extension office.

"Those attending will hear about a practical demonstration of biomass heat and power that is being developed in Christian County," says Gary Letterly, U of I Extension natural resources educator. "This project is using existing technology in residential heating, and regional manufacturing partnerships are being identified to process perennial grasses into solid fuel pellets."

Letterly adds that burning *Miscanthus* produces only as much carbon dioxide as it removes from the air, making it a clean energy source. In addition, the grass requires only minimal water and fertilizer.

For more details about this teleconference, contact the office or register online at <http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/champign>. Cost is \$5, and advance registration is needed.

Experts to Discuss Prairie Restoration

There is a lot of interest in restoring areas to native plants, but people often don't know how to go about it. To help provide those answers, University of Illinois Extension is offering the teleconference, *Seeing Prairie—Taking a Closer Look at Prairie and its Restoration*. The program is October 5, at 1:30 or 6:00 p.m. at the Extension Office.

"This informative program explains techniques that recreate the natural beauty of the prairie landscape," says Duane Friend, U of I Extension natural resources educator. "Ken Robertson and Don Gardner, experts in prairie restoration, will be the featured presenters."

You'll learn about the diversity of original prairies in Illinois, especially plants that are characteristic of high-quality prairies. You'll also see photos of recent prairie restorations that vary in how they resemble original prairies. You'll hear about frequently implemented restoration methods as well as essential practices for successful prairie restoration work.

Cost for the program is \$5 per person. Register online at <http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/champaign> by October 1.

Congrats to Newly Certified MG's!

Ellen Bach

Alice Englebretsen

Traci Lipps

Carol Lyke

Debra Mason

Christine McLerran

Peggy Reffett

Stephen Reinhart

Wyatt Reinhart

Phyllis Williams

Programs

Garden Walk 2009 was Success

Many thanks to everyone who helped make the 2009 Garden Walk a success! Great volunteers make for a great event. Many positive comments were received from the attendees, homeowners and vendors.

1125 tickets were sold totaling \$8,517.00 in ticket sales. Total income from ticket sales and vendor booth rental was \$12,581.00. After expenses, the net profit was \$9,360.82.

See articles on page 3 for more information about:

Natural Resource Telenet Series Miscanthus as a Clean Energy Source

August 31 at 1:30 p.m.

Prairie Restoration

October 5 at 1:30 or 6:00 p.m.

Four Season Gardening Telenets - Fall Series

The Four Seasons Gardening Telenet series is your chance to learn from some of Illinois' leading lawn and garden experts. Whether you need advice on caring for your trees, or you want ideas for container gardening, or you want to learn how to grow orchids, you'll get the answers you need at our Four Seasons Gardening program.

Each topic is offered at two different times and is presented via teleconference by a University of Illinois Extension horticulture expert. You can attend any topic that interests you—whether it's just one or two sessions or the entire series.

Advance registration is needed one week before the session you plan to attend. The \$5 per session registration fee includes handouts. Register on-line at: <http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/champaign>

Tree Maintenance

September 15 at 1 P.M. & 17 at 7 P.M.

Proper maintenance and care are key to ensuring that your trees will be around for years to come. Correct pruning, mulching, and general cultural practices are important for overall tree health. This program gives you the basics to properly care for your trees.

Poisonous Plants

September 29 at 1 P.M. & October 1 at 7 P.M.

Have you ever developed a rash from a plant or nibbled on a berry—and wondered whether it was poisonous? Learn about common Illinois poisonous plants in our landscape so you can avoid them.

Bonsai

October 13 at 1 P.M. & 15 at 7 P.M.

Bonsai is the art of aesthetic miniaturization of trees by growing them in containers. Cultivation includes techniques for shaping, watering, and re-potting in various styles of containers.



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All Master Gardeners, including trainees, interns, and actives, are encouraged and welcome to attend any programs or meetings. All meetings are held at the Extension office unless stated otherwise.

August

- 6, Thursday, 9:00 a.m. – Advisory Committee WILL NOT meet
- 6, Thursday, 10:30 a.m.- Program Committee at the Extension Office
- 18, Tuesday, 7:00 p.m. – Light up the Night with Bart Boewe and Ice Cream Social (at Jan Fisher’s Garden)
- 20 Thursday, 11:00 a.m.- Idea Garden Committee meeting at the Extension Office
- 29, Saturday, 9:00 a.m.- Idea Garden “Save the Garden” workday and Seed Saving talk
- 31 Monday, 1:30 p.m. – Natural Resource Telenet- Miscanthus as a Clean Energy Source

September

- 1, Tuesday, 1:00 p.m. – Garden Walk Committee meeting
- 3, Thursday, 9:00 a.m. - Advisory Committee meeting
- 3, Thursday, 10:30 a.m. - Program Committee meeting
- 10-12, Thursday-Saturday- Master Gardener State Conference in Effingham
- 15, Tuesday, 1:00 p.m. – Tree Maintenance Telenet
- 15, Tuesday, 6:00 p.m. – Master Gardener Monthly meeting-Tree Walk at Hessel Park with Sandy Mason and picnic dinner
- 17, Thursday, 7:00 p.m. – Tree Maintenance Telenet (repeat)
- 29, Tuesday, 1:00 p.m. – Poisonous Plants Telenet

October

- 1, Thursday, 9:00 a.m. - Advisory Committee meeting
- 1, Thursday, 10:30 a.m. – Program Committee meeting
- 1, Thursday, 7:00 p.m. – Poisonous Plants Telenet (repeat)
- 5, Monday, 1:30 p.m.- Prairie Restoration Telenet
- 5, Monday, 6:00 p.m. – Prairie Restoration Telenet (repeat)

flourish.


The Morton Arboretum
4100 Illinois Route 53
Liste, IL 60532
Phone: 630-719-2468
www.mortonarb.org
E-mail: registrar@mortonarb.org

Bringing Nature Home

A Special Guest Lecture

Doug Tallamy, Author of *Bringing Nature Home*; Professor and Chair
The Department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware

Presented at The Morton Arboretum

Based on his best-selling book, **Bringing Nature Home**, Doug eloquently explains the link between human well-being, native plant species, and native insects and wildlife. He offers practical recommendations about which plants can support the most wildlife and shows gardeners how they can make a difference in helping to slow the rapid loss of habitat and help sustain biodiversity.

Dr. Tallamy has taught insect taxonomy and behavioral ecology for many years. His primary research goal is to better understand the ways insects interact with garden plants and how such interactions determine the diversity of animal communities. Doug's book will be available for purchase at the program.

◆HL400. Saturday, September 19;
9 □ 11 pm.
Thornhill Education Center.
\$35 (members \$25).

register today!

Visit www.mortonarb.org
or call the Registrar's office at
630-719-2468



Deadline to submit articles for future issues....

September 15

November 15



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
EXTENSION

University of Illinois Extension Champaign County

801 N. Country Fair Drive, Ste. D Champaign, IL 61821

Tel: 217.333.7672 Fax: 217.333.7683

<http://champaign.extension.uiuc.edu>

University of Illinois Extension
Champaign County Master Gardeners
801 N. County Fair Drive, Suite D
Champaign, IL 61821-2492

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Non-Profit Organization
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Champaign IL 61821