

Madison-Monroe-St Clair Unit

Below the Canopy

For Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists



JUNE
2022



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Garden Tour Wrap-Up

Thank you to the committees and volunteers who helped make the 2022 events a success. It takes a lot of manpower to get through the days. We appreciate the donations that helped make the raffles and markets a success. We are still putting together a final report, but it seems that the audience was excited to view gardens again. There were lots of positive comments during the events from ticket holders. Proceeds from the events are given to the county Foundations which supports Extension programming.

The Gardens in Bloom Tour in St. Clair County had approximately 210 visitors. The Madison County Garden Tour had approximately 290 visitors.

The Garden Tour committees will begin planning the 2023 event this month. The committees meet 6-8 times a year and select the gardens, review marketing efforts and coordinates the events. We welcome new committee members. Contact Sarah if interested in joining.

St. Louis Open Yards

A New Garden Tour Program....The new St Louis Open Yards - A Native Landscaping program is coordinated by Mitch Leachman, co-founder and former coordinator of St. Louis Audubon's Bring Conservation Home program. This garden tour program mirrors the UK and Scotland's National Garden Scheme and implements a means to inspire and promote the use of native plants by providing gardeners access to private landscapes around the St. Louis region. St. Louis Open Yards will ideally compliment existing garden tours by providing a more flexible and season long opportunity to book a tour. Garden visitors register online at stloopenyards.com which provides detailed descriptions of each landscape and garden availability. Registration includes a nominal fee of \$5 per person, per garden, with a portion of that fee shared with a local charity or non profit selected by each individual garden owner. We believe material support to nonprofits serving our region is just as important in building community as the healthy environment these native landscapes help create. To register for a garden tour or to open your own landscape, please visit our website at stloopenyards.com.

Plant Clinic Reports

Ever wonder what samples the U of I Plant Clinic is looking at during the year? They will be publishing weekly sample summaries on their website! A monthly report for May was recently posted, but it will be a weekly report going forward. Check them out at: <https://extension.illinois.edu/plant-clinic/plant-clinic-weekly-summaries>

Staff Updates

We have open positions at the Extension office. Details will be available later this month.

- We will repost the Unit County Director position . A Master's Degree and supervisory experience is required. Lynn Heins is still serving as our interim County Director.
- We will open an Office Support Assistant position for the Collinsville office. Nicole Hellon will transition and oversee the fiscal responsibilities in the Unit.

Continuing Education Programs

Four Season Webinar Series

Register to participate online [here](#).

The program is also available at both offices. Call or email ruth1@illinois.edu to reserve a spot.

- **July 12 at 1:30 p.m.—Identifying Common Lawn and Garden Weeds**
- **August 16 at 1:30 p.m.—Late Summer and Fall Blooming Plants**

MG Monthly Continuing Education Series

New for 2022, we're launching a continuing education webinar series entirely devoted to Master Gardeners. Because these webinars will be directed just towards your continuing education, we'll be able to go more in-depth into topics which will help you better your horticultural knowledge, as well as cover those volunteer specific topics that our other webinars can't necessarily delve into. Register at any time [here](#).

- July 7 at 1 p.m.- Jay Hayek- Illinois Big Tree Register

Recordings for each month's session will be located on this Youtube playlist: <https://go.illinois.edu/monthlyCEseries>

WADE: Discover a Wetland!

June 17 from 8:30-9:30 p.m. at Arlington Wetlands, Pontoon Beach

The event is hosted by HeartLands Conservancy. WADE: Watershed Adventures and Discovery Experience Program is BACK for its second year! Bring your headlamp and join HeartLands Conservancy and SIUE Entomologist, Dr. Jason Williams, at Arlington Wetlands for a guided firefly hike! We will learn about fireflies, wetlands, frogs, and more. Please register to attend [here](#). Arlington Wetlands is located on Arlington Drive in Pontoon Beach, IL.

Neighbor Night

June 21 at 6:00 p.m. at NGRREC, East Alton

The event is hosted by National Great Rivers Research and Education Center. June's event will feature guest presenter, Maisah Kha, from Mississippi River Network. Learn about new policies and initiatives that are currently underway to increase investments in clean water, healthy habitats and nature-based solutions to flooding. This month's Neighbor Night will be both in-person and broadcasted virtually. There will be a 30-minute field station tour starting at 6:15 p.m., followed by the presentation starting at 7 p.m. The address for those attending in person is One Confluence Way, East Alton, IL. For more information, contact Sarah Fisher Director of Environmental Education at saafisher@lc.edu or (618) 468-2783.

Summer Prairie Walk

July 16 at 9 a.m. at Paul Wightman Subterranean Nature Preserve, Fufts

Join Clifftop Board member, Laura Schaefer, at Paul Wightman Subterranean Nature Preserve, 3325 G Road, Fufts for a summer hike through the prairie to learn more about what's in bloom.

SAVE THE DATES

State Master Gardener Conference-September 8 & 9 at Tinley Park

State Master Naturalist Conference-October 17 at Allerton

Check out the Unit Webpage for the most up to date info.

<https://extension.illinois.edu/mms>



Welcome to My Jungle

Dr. Elizabeth Wahle, Extension Educator

When you collect plants, it is rather useful to label and record everything added to the garden. I wish I had started sooner. I did not do this the first few years of starting my current garden, so many of my oldest plants are unknown down to cultivar and remain unlabeled. After a few years, I began making an effort to include a metal identification tag with a waterproof label with every plant that went in the garden as well as creating a spreadsheet I could print the labels from using a label maker. Many of my labels have been in place unmolested for 15 plus years, whereas others have not made it a year. I have hundreds of unmarked plants and most, if not all, are due to animal activity in the garden rather than my failure to tag them. My dog, Sophia, has done her share. She found great sport in pulling up labels by the hundreds when she was a puppy. I despaired of ever being able to label a plant again but, thankfully, she seems to have finally lost interest in the tags.



Animal-chewed metal plant labels found in the hidden recesses of the yard

I have occasionally witnessed deer snag a hoof on a label, pulling it out of the ground, but it is chipmunks and squirrels, or some other rodents I suspect are responsible for the vast majority. I have never actually seen them in the act, but whoever pulls the metal tags up, carries them off and chews them to bits. I find tag remnants all over the yard, including crotches of trees. Sometimes it looks like they had a tag-chewing party, with all the attendees bringing their own from all corners of the garden. I have moved to a heavier gauge name plate that cannot be easily removed from the stake. So far, none of my new labels have been destroyed.



For every old label still out there, I must wait until the plant blooms again the following year to be sure I am replacing the destroyed label correctly. It is just amazing how many times two very similar looking plants planted close together both get their tags destroyed, or it fails to bloom the following year, adding yet another year to the mystery. It is never the plant I know like the back of my hand, but rather the difficult to positively identify, one that has never bloomed, or some plant I failed to enter in my inventory list and do not "officially" know or remember I have. For those reasons, I have recently started building a photo reference library from my plant inventory to match up plants to their missing labels. I build it as I need it. I started working recently on photos of all my lilies after an unlabeled lily bloomed for the first time, and happily I was able to identify and label *Lilium* 'Partner' – Asiatic Hybrid Lily. Such satisfaction!

Lilium 'Partner' - Hybrid Asiatic Lily

What's Going On Out There?
Naturalist Phenology Report for mid-June to mid-July, 2022
Elizabeth Frisbie and Bill Klunk, Master Naturalists

Elizabeth is on vacation this month. Parts of this column ran previously in 2016. Wondering While Wandering will return in July.

- ⇒ June is an excellent month for planet viewing in our region's night sky. In the early morning on June 10th, Mercury moves to complete an amazing alignment of all 5 bright planets! Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn will be aligned from east to west across more than 90 degrees of sky in order of their distance from the Sun. They will remain this way for the remainder of June. This is a very rare occurrence!
- ⇒ Praying Mantis nymphs will emerge from their egg case during this period. The native Carolina Mantid (*Stagmomantis carolina*) and non-native European Mantid (*Mantis religiosa*) are similar in size, which is near 2 ½" at full maturity. The native female mantid has short wings that do not extend to the tip of the abdomen. The European mantid has a black spot on the inside of its front legs. The non-native Chinese Mantid (*Tenodera aridifolia*) is much larger than the previous two species at 5", and its wings have a green outboard stripe and extend past the abdomen tip.
- ⇒ Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) ducklings usually hatch during this time period. The hen will lead the young to nearby water within 24 hours of hatching. A typical brood consists of 6 to 14 young.
- ⇒ Elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*) will bloom during June and start forming small berry fruits by mid-July. The small white flowers form in cymes attracting many butterflies and other insects during this time. The developing small blackish berries will be a boon for songbirds and small mammals at maturity later in the summer.
- ⇒ Keep an eye out in the evening for young Striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*) and young Raccoon (*Procyon lotor*) to be out walking with their mothers. Both typically walk in a single file line behind the mother.
- ⇒ The Racer (*Coluber constrictor*) snake is found throughout the state in a combination of both wooded and nearby open areas. It is known to raise its head above surrounding ground cover to look and then race-away when threatened. This common snake lays its eggs in late June and July.
- ⇒ Bottlebrush grass (*Elymus hystrix*) is a cool season grass that commonly grows statewide in deciduous forest and floodplains. As the unique seed heads form during this period, look for it sometimes in the near vicinity of White ash (*Fraxinus americana*) trees.

References: Comic Pursuits, ILPIN, INHS, MDC, University of Illinois Extension archives, and USNO

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