

The Seed Packet

March 2019

For Master Gardeners & Master Naturalists of Clark, Crawford & Edgar Counties

Become a citizen scientist for pollinators with University of Illinois

URBANA, Ill. — University of Illinois Extension is calling all lovers of bees, butterflies, and other pollinators that keep our crops and gardens growing to join scientists in tracking their distribution and habitat use across the state, from the comfort of your home, school, or community garden.

I-Pollinate is a citizen-science research initiative through the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, designed to collect state-wide pollinator data. Volunteers can join up to three research projects and collect data on monarch butterfly egg and caterpillar abundance, pollinator visitation to ornamental flowers, and state bee distributions.

David Zaya, a plant ecologist with the Illinois Natural History Survey, is leading the monarch butterfly portion of the project. Zaya has been involved in state efforts to help the monarchs as they are considered for listing under the Endangered Species Act.

"Older landowners across Illinois have told me anecdotes of how many more bees, butterflies, and other pollinating insects they used to see," says Zaya. "Scientific data has started to show evidence of these declines, too. Our hope is that I-Pollinate will help us understand and use gardens to contribute to pollinator conservation and resurgence."

Zaya has worked with Alexandra Harmon-Threatt from the University of Illinois Department of Entomology to design a study anyone can join by

planting a simple 4x6-foot "pollinator pocket" as their personal study site for the summer. Instructions for the garden are provided on the project website linked below.



I-Pollinate volunteers can also join a decade-long project called BeeSpotter, led by entomologist May Berenbaum. The project uses photos submitted by volunteers across the Midwest to collect baseline information on the population status of honey bees and bumble bees. In addition to providing crucial information on where different bees occur, BeeSpotter volunteers have discovered two rare species in Illinois.

To learn more about becoming a citizen scientist with I-Pollinate and sign up to join, visit the project website at publish.illinois.edu/pollinatorproject.

Extension will offer a live webinar training with the scientists on April 3 at 3 p.m. for volunteers to learn about the projects and ask questions. To register for the training, visit go.illinois.edu/IPollinateTraining. A recording of the training will be shared on the project website.

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Master Gardener Column

March 2019

by Jan Phipps



While we may have some temptingly warm days in March, it is too early to do any actual planting. The soil is too cold, and we will still encounter many nights below freezing. And, besides being too cold, the soil is often too wet to work in March.

What can you do outside in March? Dormant season pruning can be done the first half of the month. Do not prune any spring flowering shrubs or trees because you will remove the buds for this year's flowering. Wait until right after they finish blooming. Ornamental grasses should be cut down to within a few inches of the ground by April 1st. If you left your perennials and annuals for winter interest, they can be cleared off also. Depending on the wetness of the soil, weed out any winter annuals before they start blooming and setting seed.

March is an excellent time to catch up on the news of horticulture studies and changes. The following are a few you might find interesting.

The genus *Aster* no longer exists in Illinois or anywhere else in the world. Yes, the plants are still there, but they have been given a new botanical name. They now belong to the genus *Symphotrichum*. This happens occasionally. I think daisies have been redesignated three times over the last several decades.

Daffodils produce a natural alkaloid called Haemanthamine (HAE) that may result in a cancer treatment. HAE removed from a popular daffodil, *Narcissus* 'King Alfred' could be used to kill cancerous cells without affecting normal cells. Cancer cells use ribosomes to accelerate and spread their growth. HAE inhibits the production and the function of ribosomes. The next step is looking at other alkaloids related to HAE.

In another study, scientist at MIT used an immersion process to produce glow in the dark plants. The immersion process can be used on a large variety of plants unlike genetic engineering that is limited to a specific plant. Using the same chemicals that make fireflies glow, the researchers developed watercress

that would light up for 3.5 hours. Perhaps in the future your houseplant will double as a night light.

A group of researchers have been studying the effect of climate change on Mount Rainier's wildflowers. It seems both the duration and the timing of blooms have changed. Native wildflowers have evolved to bloom when their pollinators are also available. These interactive and interdependent communities are being affected by climate change.



The final study I read involves progress on developing mildew-resistant impatiens. 2008 was a bad year for impatiens. Powdery mildew appeared and quickly destroyed impatiens in nurseries and gardens. Once it is in the soil, it is almost impossible to eradicate. The disease resistant impatiens are not on the market yet, but there is strong hope for the future.

The University of Illinois Extension Master Gardeners of Edgar County can be reached at 217-465-8585.

Answering Hort Hotline Questions: "Does Glyphosate Cause Cancer?"

Today, I received an email from State Coordinator, Candice Hart about Glyphosate, due to some recent court decisions in California. Below is her answer:

"Several questions have come up from volunteers recently about the information circulating regarding glyphosate's link to cancer and what the University's policy is on using glyphosate. I'm sure this will continue to come up this year, so please see below the response we should use for the time being.

For the immediate future the best we can say is that Extension does not have a policy on glyphosate, if the client wants to use the product they should read and follow all label instructions. Additionally, if a client determines they are not interested in chemical weed control you can recommend other weed management strategies.

As always, use the [Pest Management in the Home Landscape](#) book as your source of herbicide information. Oregon State's pesticide safety team has an article posted that may help provide some background information, but until we have an official U of I source and policy to share, let's stick with the statement above to share with clients.

<https://extension.oregonstate.edu/pests-diseases/pesticides/glyphosate-questions-answers>"

4 Seasons Webinars

Watch for webinars to be scheduled for future viewing once they are posted on YouTube.

April in Paris

Open to the public, this popular annual gardening seminar is filling up fast! Sponsored by University of Illinois Extension and Edgar County Master Gardeners, **April in Paris** will be held on Thursday, April, 11, 2019 at Cornerstone Baptist Church, 15197 US Hwy 150 in Paris, Illinois. This half-day event will feature Chris Benda, illinoisbotanizer.com, who will present on wildflowers for the home garden. Tree health care and pruning will be the topic of speaker Ryan Pankau from Illinois Extension, and Richard Schroeder from Illinois Prairie Hosta Society will speak about designing with hostas.

The doors open at 8:15 a.m. with breakfast and registration, and the program begins at 8:45. The cost is \$25 which includes breakfast, materials, speakers and garden-related vendors. The event is open to the public. Master Gardeners who attend are eligible for three hours of continuing education credits.

To reserve your spot, please call University of Illinois Extension in Edgar County at 217-465-8585 or register online at go.illinois.edu/aprilinparis.



Teaching garden at Texas A & M where Steven and Kim Trine attended the **Junior Master Gardener National Training** at the end of February.

Bluebird Society Conference



Mark your calendars for the 2019 ECIBS Annual Conference!! It will be Saturday, April 13, 2019 in the 4H Building at the Fairground in Paris. Registration starts at 9 AM and the conference will commence at 9:30 AM. This is our big event of the year and there is something for everyone, so please come join us! Our keynote speaker this year is noted Illinois birder and conservationist Dr Matt Fraker. He'll be speaking on his conservation efforts in Woodford County IL as well as his numerous other conservation interests and his passion for birding. He promises to be a fascinating speaker and we are eagerly looking forward to hosting him!

We will also have some of our own members speaking and giving demonstrations on various topics. The speakers and presentations are always very informative and interesting and the interaction among the speakers and the audience is always very engaging.

The popular silent auction will be held again to raise funds for ECIBS expenses including such items as bird feeders, birding books, nest boxes, bird and nature-themed decorative items, and framed nature art. There will also be door prizes for some lucky attendees. A delicious catered lunch will be provided as part of the \$10.00 registration fee. We'll also have breakfast snacks available for "coffee time".

ENCLOSE YOUR CHECK MADE OUT TO ECIBS (\$10.00 PER PERSON) AND MAIL TO: JANICE THODE, 2420 COUNTY ROAD 0 NORTH, BROADLANDS, IL 61816 DEADLINE FOR RESERVATIONS IS APRIL 6, 2019.

Upcoming Events

March 26: 9 am – 4 pm Live Webinar MG Training on Fruits **BY APPOINTMENT ONLY**. Call office.

March 28 : 10 am – E Tube - Pruning Deciduous **Postponed** - 4 Seasons You d Hentschel

April 1-5: Soil Testing – Samples collected in Clark and Edgar County offices for gardens and yards @ \$10 per sample. Results will be mailed.

April 2: 9 am – 4 pm Live Webinar MG Training on IPM **BY APPOINTMENT ONLY**. Call office.

April 3: 3 pm – ***I-Pollinate Citizen Science Webinar*** at Edgar County Extension Office, Paris

April 4 @ 9 am – Edgar County Master Gardener Meeting at Edgar County Extension Office, Paris

April 5-7: Illinois Indigenous Plant Symposium at John A. Logan College, Carterville, IL (*see insert*)

April 6: 10 am – 6 pm: ***Master Gardeners at Mom's Weekend Flower Show***, U of I Stock Pavilion, Urbana

April 6: A Day in the Garden Patch, Pontiac, IL

April 6: Gardener's Day, Macomb, IL

April 6: Gardenfest, McHenry County

April 9 @ 6:30 pm – Evening Master Gardener Meeting at Clark County Extension Office, Marshall

April 11: 8 – 12 – **April in Paris** Garden Conference at Cornerstone Baptist Church, Paris.

April 13: 9 am -3 pm **Annual Bluebird Society Meeting**, at 4-H Fairgrounds in Paris.

April 13: Gardener's Gathering, Germantown Hills

April 13 – Gardener's Big Day, Spoon River College, Canton, IL

April 22-27: Earth Day Display at ZF in Marshall, sponsored by Master Naturalist of Unit 20.

May 2 @ 9 am – Edgar County Master Gardener Meeting at Edgar County 4-H Fairgrounds, Paris

May 2: 4-H Conservation Day in Crawford County

May 4: 8 – 11 am ***Evening Master Gardeners' Plant & Bake Sale***, Clark County Office, Marshall

May 14 @ 6:30 pm – Evening Master Gardener Meeting at Clark County Extension Office, Marshall

May 18: 7 am – Noon: ***Vermilion County MG Plant Sale***, First Presbyterian Church, Danville, IL

Sunday, June 9: Vermilion Co MG Garden Walk, Danville (*details to follow*)

Saturday, June 15: Champaign Co MG Garden Walk, Champaign, IL (*details to follow*)

4-H Fair Dates

Clark County 4-H Fair: **July 21-25**

Crawford County 4-H Fair: **July 18-25**

Edgar County 4-H Fair: **July 19-24**

October 7-9: Protecting Pollinators in Urban Landscapes 2019 National Conference, Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Gardens, Cincinnati, OH

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If you need a reasonable accommodation to participate in this program, please contact your local county Extension Office at 217-465-8585 (Paris) or 217-826-5422 (Marshall) or 618-546-1549 (Robinson). Early requests are strongly encouraged to allow sufficient time for meeting your access needs.

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