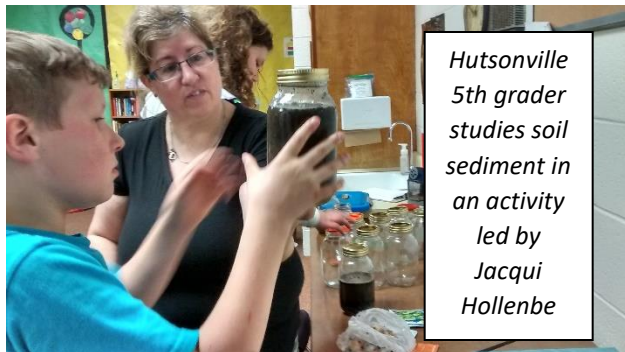


The Seed Packet

April/May 2019 For Master Gardeners & Master Naturalists of Clark, Crawford & Edgar Counties

Teaching others to “Learn to Grow” in 2019

Mike teaching about butterflies



Hutsonville 5th grader studies soil sediment in an activity led by Jacqui Hollenbe

Master Naturalists Sara and Liz tend the teaching garden of native plants at the Edgar County Historical Society



Master Gardeners & Master Naturalists Extending Knowledge to Adult Audiences...

April in Paris

Clark County Plant Sale

Earth Day Display at ZF

New Master Gardener interns: Amber Raimer and Bonnie Kelly

Soil Sample collection and education



Erica Shannon along with Teri Dennis teach about composting in Robinson at Conservation Day



Teresa works with Shiloh student in planting activity



"See my butterfly"



Shiloh 3rd Graders learn about Farm to Table from Mary Kay, Marian and Teresa.



Crestwood students awaiting the release of their butterflies at the culmination of their unit.

I ILLINOIS

Extension

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURAL, CONSUMER & ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

2019 Garden Walk
Saturday, June 15
9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

The **Champaign County Master Gardeners** invite you to their 25th Garden Walk on Saturday, June 15 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Purchase *online* tickets at <https://web.extension.illinois.edu/registration/?RegistrationID=19591>. *Online ticket sales will end on Wednesday, June 5.*

Purchase tickets at Country Arbors Nursery, Danville Gardens Too, Prairie Gardens, Ropp's Flower Factory (Mahomet location), Schuren Nursery, Champaign County UI Extension office, The Fitness Center, or from any Master Gardener.

Be sure to tour the Idea Garden on South Lincoln Avenue in Urbana. Master Gardeners will be in their garden sections sharing information about plants and design. Idea Garden visitors can also shop the Garden Boutique vendors.

There will also be short demonstrations throughout the day to include:

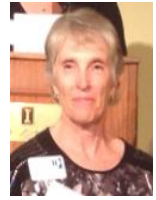
- 9 am Proper Tree Planting
- 10 am Container Planting
- 11 am Rose Pruning
- 12 pm - Proper Tree Planting
- 1 pm - Container Planting
- 2 pm - Rose Pruning

Garden Walk Locations:

Meadow Drive, Urbana - Suzanne Trupin and Stan Johnson; **Pell Circle, Urbana** - Pam and Chris Hohn; **Sherwin Circle, Urbana** - Kathleen Holden and David Prochaska; **Robeson Park Drive, Champaign** - Joyce and Ashley Beitel; **Glenn Park Drive, Champaign** - Ed and Sheri Wachala; **Prospect Avenue, Champaign** - Mike and Susan Weber; **Crisis Nursery, Hill Street, Urbana**; **Idea Garden, Florida and Lincoln Avenue, Urbana**

The Vermilion County Master Gardeners invite you to their annual Garden Walk on Sunday, June 9 from 12-5 p.m. web.extension.illinois.edu/cfiv

Master Gardener Column
April 2019
by Jan Phipps



The beginning of the growing season is a good time to refresh our minds about pruning perennials. Those new to gardening are often a little hesitant to prune their plants fearing to make a mistake that will cause irreversible damage. That is seldom the case. The following are several reasons why and when you should prune.

By far the easiest is fall and/or spring clean up because you are working on dead plant material. Perennials infested with insects, or especially disease, should have all dead debris cleared away after a killing freeze in the fall. You don't want any pathogens over-wintering on dead leaves. Everything else can be left until early spring. The object is to remove the unsightly dead parts to make way for the new spring growth. A few perennials like candytuft and coral bells are mostly evergreen but may need a few brown leaves removed in the spring to tidy up the plant.

Occasionally we deadhead to prevent reseeding. Rose campion (actually a biennial) will spread where you may not want it so cutting off the spent flowers and seed heads before they open is a good idea. The same goes for garden phlox. You can do it by individual seed head or cutting back the grouping of plants by a third with large garden shears.

Speaking of garden phlox, pruning for better air circulation springs to mind. Perennials like phlox that are particularly susceptible to foliar diseases (mildews and bacterial wilts) need air movement to dry them out fast after the morning dew. Once the stems are up and growing in the spring, cut out several of the interior stems down to the ground, opening up the plant, allowing air to circulate around all the stems.

Mums, autumn joy sedum, and asters have a tendency to grow really tall, split and droop over. Pruning them in early summer forces them to grow lateral shoots resulting in a compact rounded habit that holds together. Some sources recommend cutting the plant back by half while others say a third. I go with the third. Most perennials will respond with

a bushier habit whenever the growing tips are removed. Just stop by July.

Size matters to some gardeners, especially if they grow blooms as cut flowers or for competitions. Certain perennials produce one major bloom flanked by two smaller ones. Pruning the side shoots frees up all the energy to grow one very large flower. Dahlias, roses and peonies respond well to disbudding.

Or, conversely, deadheading the central flower spike once it is finished, will encourage the lateral buds to develop and bloom to their full potential. Butterfly bush responds well to this type of pruning, which extends the length of time the plant is in bloom providing a food source for pollinators.

Finally, many perennials and most annuals will grow more flowers if the old spent ones are deadheaded before they set seeds. It is in the plants best interest for survival of its species to get those seeds disbursed. If thwarted, they will keep trying.

Master Gardener Column

May 2019

by Jan Phipps



Nitrogen: plants need it, it is abundant yet fast disappearing, and soil tests can't measure it. Understanding where it comes from, and when and how to use it will help you care for your gardens.

Nitrogen is an important component of chlorophyll. I'm sure you remember from grade school science, chlorophyll plus sunlight results in plant growth. Without nitrogen, chlorophyll can't function properly resulting in stunted, yellowing plants.

Plants take up nitrogen in several ways. It is plentiful in the air, but in a form plants can't use. Lightning can convert it into a useable form, but not enough or often enough.

Plants can take up nitrogen when it is dissolved in water as nitrate or ammonium. Nitrate is nitrogen combined with oxygen while ammonium is nitrogen combined with hydrogen.

Yet another method is biological fixation where certain plants, mostly legumes, pull nitrogen out of the air and deposit into the soil. Then soil bacteria

and other organisms convert it to a form usable by plant roots.

Organic matter is also a source of nitrogen. It too relies on microorganisms in the soil to convert it first into ammonium and then nitrate. The increase of moisture and warmth in spring speeds up decomposition of organic matter, which speeds up microbial activity, which speeds up available nitrate and ammonium, resulting in plant growth.

Even though soil tests are unable to accurately measure nitrogen, they can determine the percentage of organic matter present. The more organic matter, the greater the potential of making nitrogen available to your plants.

Compost is a great source of organic matter and it is free if you make it yourself. Another advantage compost has over both organic and synthetic fertilizers is it provides not only the three main nutrients of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium, but also micronutrients that all plants need.

Remember heat is needed to convert organic matter to a useable nitrogen source. During cold springs your plants may need a boost from a faster acting fertilizer. Soybean meal, an organic choice, provides some quick nitrogen. Fish emulsion is another organic choice. Synthetic fertilizers, made by combining air with natural gas, will do the same.

Which plants need the most nitrogen? Vegetables and fruits because the crops are harvested, removing the nitrogen that went into them. Annuals require an intermediate amount of nitrogen because they produce flowers all summer. Perennials need the least amount.

A promotional poster for the Illinois State Master Gardener Conference. The background is a close-up of green leaves. The text is centered on a white rectangular area. At the top, it says "Save the Date!" in a large, green, cursive font. Below that, in a smaller, black, sans-serif font, it says "Illinois State Master Gardener Conference". Underneath, in an even smaller font, it says "September 5-6, 2019" and "Quad Cities- East Moline, IL". At the bottom right, there is the logo for "ILLINOIS Extension" with a small circular seal next to it.

Upcoming Events

June 6: 9 am – **Edgar County Master Gardener Meeting** at Edgar County 4-H Fairgrounds, Paris

June 6: 5:30-7:30 pm **Jams & Jellies Preserving Workshop**, Robinson, IL at Lincoln Trail College Library. Call or see Extension website to register

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

June 11: 6:30 pm – **Evening Master Gardener Meeting** at Clark County Extension Office, Marshall

Saturday, June 15: 9am–4pm - **Champaign Co MG Garden Walk**, Champaign, IL (details inside)

June 18: 10:30 am & 2 pm – **Children’s Garden Storytime: *Tops and Bottoms***, Paris Public Library

June 22: 4-7 pm – **Edgar County 4-H BBQ** at fairgrounds. See a 4-Her or the office for tickets

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

July 11: 9 am – **Edgar County Master Gardener Meeting** at 4-H Fairgrounds, Paris

July 15: 6-8:30 pm - **Jams and Jellies Preserving Workshop**, Clark County Extension Office, Marshall, IL Call or see Extension website to register

4-H Fair Dates

Clark County 4-H Fair, Martinsville: **July 20-24**
Crawford County 4-H Fair, Oblong: **July 18-25**
Edgar County 4-H Fair, Paris: **July 19-24**

August 1: 9 am – **Edgar County Master Gardener Meeting** at 4-H fairgrounds, Paris

August 6: 5:30- 7 pm - **Salsa & Tomato Products Preserving Workshop**, Lincoln Trail College, Robinson, IL

August 13: 6:30 pm – **Evening Master Gardener Meeting** at Clark County Extension Office, Marshall

September 5: 9 am – **Edgar County Master Gardener Meeting** at 4-H Fairgrounds, Paris

September 5th & 6th - **State Master Gardener Conference** in the Quad Cities. *Details to follow.*

September 10: 6:30 pm – **Evening Master Gardener Meeting** at Clark County Extension Office, Marshall

October 3 – 8:30 am – 3 pm – 4-H Conservation Day at the 4-H fairgrounds

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

October 24-26 – **State Master Naturalist Conference** at Touch of Nature Center in Southern Illinois

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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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