

# NEWS

## OF THE FEDERATED GARDEN CLUBS OF IOWA

# SUMMER 2020



**Plant America with Trees: Each One Plant One**

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### DATEBOOK 2020

June 22-23	CANCELED - FGCI State Flower Show & Meeting
August 24-25	Judges Symposium, Marshalltown, IA
Sept 14	FGCI Fall Board Meeting, Clear Lake
Sept 16-17	Gardening School, IA Arboretum, Madrid, IA
Sept. 24-26	NGC Fall Board Meeting, Fargo, ND
Oct, 19-20	Central Region Convention, Middlebury, IN

### DATEBOOK 2021

April 17	District VIII, LeMars
April 23	District VI Meeting, Emmetsburg, IA
May 7	District II Meeting, TBA
May 17-22	National Garden Clubs Convention, NJ
June 7	District IV, V, VII - Des Moines
June 21-22	FGCI State Flower Show & Meeting, Clear Lake



# NEWS

## of the Federated Garden Clubs of Iowa, Inc.

SUMMER 2020

Vol. 90 No. 2

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**Special focus:** Increasing membership 21% by '21

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**FGCI President:** Terri Bonner Ewers



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**Theme:** The Joy of Gardening  
**Special focus:** What brings you joy in the garden?

### DEADLINES

For articles submitted for NEWS

Spring Issue	January 10
Summer Issue	April 10
<b>Fall Issue</b>	<b>July 10</b>
Winter Issue	October 10

Please send information - articles - special club dates to:

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Advertising Rates

1/8 page	\$25.00	1/4 page	\$50.00
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### Federated Garden Clubs of Iowa Website:

[www.gardenclubsofiowa.org](http://www.gardenclubsofiowa.org)

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[farmhousekitchenandgardens@gmail.com](mailto:farmhousekitchenandgardens@gmail.com)

### National Garden Clubs, Inc. Website:

<http://www.gardenclub.org/>

user name: member password: conserve

### Central Region Website:

[www.ngccentralregion.org](http://www.ngccentralregion.org)

user name: member password: 7states

### Iowa Horticulture Society:

[www.iowahort.org](http://www.iowahort.org)

### Iowa State Extension Service:

<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/>

### NEWS of the Federated Garden Clubs of Iowa, Inc. Circulation

News of the FGCI (USPS 387-340) is published 4 times a year by Federated Garden Clubs of Iowa, Inc.

Editor-Sandra Gossman, 2506 Northwestern Ave, Ames, IA 50010-4636

Federated Garden Clubs of Iowa, Inc. is a tax exempt, nonprofit organization under IRS ruling 501(c)3.

Periodical's postage is paid in Ames. Annual subscription rates are \$10.00 per member

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to

NEWS of the FGCI, Sandra Gossman, 2506 Northwestern Ave, Ames, IA 50010-4637



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## FEDERATED GARDEN CLUBS OF IOWA

**Theme: The Joy of Gardening**  
**Special focus: What brings you joy in the garden?**

### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



Summer is upon us and I remain optimistic that we are back to the old 'normal' and our days of connecting face-to-face with our family and friends is here again!

The 91st Annual State Meeting and Flower Show has been canceled for June 22-23, 2020. While I'm hopeful we are out and about in June – I'm thinking we might be still hesitant to venture into large group situations. Please mark your calendars for the 92nd Annual State Meeting and Flower Show to be held June 21-22, 2021!

The Federated Garden Clubs of Iowa is resilient. There have been up and downs throughout the history of the group but the core purpose has remained the same – educate club members and the public, stimulate interest in horticulture, design, conservation, and the environment, and provide an outlet for creative expression. I would add one more—afford the opportunity to socialize with others with similar interests.

The design shown here, is a representation of what I would have given for district talks this year – it is about us! The main structure – the sturdy piece of wood, was given to me by a past member of the Swaledale Garden Club many years ago. It represents our 38 clubs and 856 members – steadfast and still going strong. The dried hydrangeas show the flexibility of the gardening organization—we meet when we can; we hold club meetings, district meetings, state meetings, Central Region meetings, NGC conventions, gardening schools, Judges Symposiums, FGCI board meetings, and flower shows. The eucalyptus keeps us off center and reminds us that we all are different but yet the same – some of us lean to the left or to the right – but when push comes to shove – we are here for one another and keep each other centered.

We have all heard the Serenity Prayer written by American theologian, Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971) in 1932 – *"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference"*. Did you know there was more? His next two lines give food for thought as well - -

*"Living one day at a time, Enjoying one moment at a time"*

Terri Bonner Ewers, FGCI President



# ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

## **“VIRTUAL FLOWER SHOW”**

While we aren't having the state meeting and show this year, we still can celebrate our gardens and our designs in a 'Virtual Flower' Show! I'm asking you to send me at least one picture (but more are fine), showing something from you. This could be a photo of a prairie flower or a favored houseplant, something you've grown in your garden, or a creative project you completed using plant material. I would also like you to take a look at the show schedule that was in the Spring NEWS –“That'll Be the Day!” and create one (or more) of the designs and send in the photos!

I'll work with our Website manager, Yvonne McCormick, to organize our photos in a semblance of a show. We'll plan to get this online this August/September at <http://www.gardenclubsofiowa.org/> -our own Federated Garden Clubs of Iowa website. There are also some plans in the works to showcase the photos at each District meeting in 2021 – so you definitely want to get your photos submitted to help represent your district!

Deadline date is August 1, 2020. Email (or print and send if you prefer) your photos to me – **Pearl@CLTEL.net**. Please include the name of the specimen, project, and/or which design class you've made for each photo. Don't forget to include your name and your club name! Carpe' Diem!

## **The Beauty Contest**

Black-eyed Susan with her golden hair,  
Dressed up with a certain flair.  
Shy violet rose from the forest floor  
And assured herself she could do no more.  
Cool daisy smiled and head held high,  
Thought haughtily, it has to be I.  
Wild rose, with scent so rare,  
Was clad in pink, her nose in the air.  
The Master looked down on the colorful array  
And observed his work, all done in a day.  
He said, “I cannot choose who should win,  
As all are beautiful without and within.”  
They turned to each other, surprise in their eyes,  
For on this day, they had learned to be wise.

*Joyce Hill Holden  
From NGC's Wildflower Expressions*

## **THE DECORAH TOWN & COUNTRY GARDEN CLUB**

presents  
An NGC Small Standard Flower

## **“ANTICIPATING THE SUMMER OLYMPICS”**



**Good Shepherd Lutheran Church**  
**701 Iowa Avenue, Decorah, IA**  
**Saturday, August 1, 2020 2 – 7 PM**  
**Open to the Public – Donations Appreciated**

## **STATE PRESIDENT'S PROJECT** **Theme: THE JOY OF GARDENING**

What brings you 'Joy in Gardening'? During my term, 2019-2021 FGCI President, I would like to award a first place (\$50), a second place (\$30), and a third place (\$20) each year to know what brings you joy in gardening as a club. For the club award, submit a picture and a brief description of what activity/event your club held that brought joy to your club and your community by June 1 each year. The winners will be announced at the State meetings to be held June 23, 2020 and June 22, 2021 at the Clear Lake Best Western Hotel.

I would also like to ask that club members email me with their own 'Joy of Gardening' ideas. What brings you joy? Let me know - I'll be compiling a list to share with us all!

Terri Bonner Ewers, FGCI President  
641-357-4139(h) 641-583-0230(c) Pearl@CLTEL.net



## **Plant America with Trees:** **Each One Plant One**

NGC members are encouraged to reach out to members of their communities in the "Plant America with Trees" effort as we hope to plant at least 165,000 trees in each year in the 2019-2021 administration. All it takes is for "Each ONE" (member) to "Plant ONE" (native tree).

This **NGC Project** was announced last fall. There is much more information in these publications than we have space for in this NEWS. Please go to the NGC website for more information - <http://gardenclub.org/projects/environmental-concerns-conservation.aspx>



**51th FGCI Judges Symposium**  
**August 24 & 25, 2020**  
**Fisher Comm. Center**  
**709 So. Center St., Marshalltown, IA**

Flower Show Judges, Garden Club Members and other persons may attend lectures on payments of tuition.  
Only National Garden Clubs, Inc. Accredited Judges are eligible to take this Symposium for credit.

**Instructors:**

**Design**      **Julia Clevett**  
3017 Maple Grove Lane  
W. Powhattan, VA 23139-5048

**Horticulture**      **Dorothy Howatt**  
630 Pepperbush Court  
Wilmington, DE 19808-4436

**August 24 (Mon.)**

7:30 am    Registration/Coffee\*  
8:00 am    Announcements  
8:00 am    "Beat the Clock" Time Management  
              "Ethics and Etiquette for Judges"  
10:00 am    Morning Break\*  
10:15 am    "Is it This or Is it That"  
              Comparison between Traditional and  
              Creative Design  
12:15 am    Lunch Break\*  
1:00 pm    Design continued with Oral Point Scoring  
3:00 pm    Afternoon Break\*  
3:15 pm    Written Point Scoring Exam  
5:15 pm    Dismissed

**August 25 (Tues.)**

8:00 am    Registration/Coffee\*  
8:20 am    Announcements  
8:30 am    "Cucurbita" Genus: Pumpkins, Gourds, Squash  
              "Foliage Container Plants in  
              Horticulture Specialty Shows"  
10:30 am    Morning Break  
10:45 pm    Horticulture continued with Oral Point Scoring  
12:00 pm    Lunch Break\*  
2:30 pm    Afternoon Break\*  
2:45 pm    Written Point Scoring Exam  
4:45 pm    Dismissed  
5:00 pm    Building cleared

\* Hospitality arrangements for coffee time is coordinated  
by Hospitality committee.

\* Lunches will be catered by Marshalltown Garden Club

For more information please contact:

Peggy Moody, Flower Show School Chairman  
2022 Westwood Acres Dr.  
Ft. Dodge, IA 50501 (515)576-6021,  
email - pmmody@mchsi.com

**Symposium 2020**  
**REGISTRATION FORM:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Garden Club \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

_____ Full Course with exam	\$125.00
_____ Full Course-Auditing-Good Standing	\$125.00
_____ Full Course-General Attendance	\$120.00
_____ One day Registration	\$ 60.00

\_\_\_\_\_ Monday \_\_\_\_\_ Tuesday

**LUNCH/SNACKS INCLUDED in Fees**

_____ Late Registration after 8/19/20	\$ 5.00
_____ Iowa Judges Council Dues 2020-21	<u>\$20.00</u>

**TOTAL**

**Status**

_____ Accredited	Date: _____	Location: _____
_____ Life	Date: _____	Location: _____
_____ Master	Date: _____	Location: _____
_____ Student	Date: _____	Location: _____
_____ Guest		

Be sure to bring

1. Appropriate Application Form (if applying for credit)
2. Exhibit Verification Form

Mail registration form, SASE, check

(payable to Iowa Federated Judges Council) to:

Sue Becker, Symposium Registrar  
504 3rd Avenue  
Le Mars, Iowa 51031

# National Garden Clubs, Inc., GARDENING SCHOOL, Course 4 Series 13

Sponsored by Federated Garden Clubs of Iowa

IOWA ARBORETUM & GARDENS, 1875 PEACH AVENUE, MADRID, IOWA

Located in the rural area between Madrid and Boone, IA

<https://iowaarboretum.org/>

September 16-17, 2020

Open to the Public

## SEPTEMBER 16, 2020 (Wednesday)

8:00 - 8:20 a.m.	COFFEE AND REGISTRATION
8:20 - 8:30	INTRODUCTIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS
8:30 - 10:00	*TECHNIQUES FOR GROWING WOODY ORNAMENTALS Austin Gimondo and Anna Talcott, Horticulture PhD students, ISU
	BREAK
10:15 - 11:45	*PRUNING TECHNIQUES To Be Announced
11:45 - 12:15 p.m.	LUNCH ( <b>Please bring sack lunch, refrigerator available</b> )
12:15 - 1:15	Supplemental Topic To Be Announced
	BREAK
1:30 - 3:30	*SPECIALIZED STYLES OF GARDENING To Be Announced

## SEPTEMBER 17, 2020 (Thursday)

8:15 a.m.	COFFEE
8:30 - 9:30	*PLANT CLASSIFICATION AND NOMENCLATURE Deb Lewis, Curator, Ada Hayden Herbarium, ISU
	BREAK
9:45 - 12:45 p.m.	*OUTDOOR IDENTIFICATION OF PLANTS Deb Lewis, Curator, Ada Hayden Herbarium, ISU (there may be a fee for hand lens in addition to class fee)
12:45 - 1:15	LUNCH ( <b>Please bring sack lunch</b> )
1:15 - 4:15	EXAM

\*SUBJECTS TO BE TESTED, Open book exams

Master Gardeners may receive 1 hour CEU for each 1 hr class time. Both days will yield 10 yr credit

**To register for the FGCI Registration** – Gardening School Course 4, Series 13, Sept. 16-17, 2020, Iowa Arboretum & Gardens, 1875 Peach Avenue, Madrid, IA. Please complete the form below

**REGISTRATIONS ACCEPTED UNTIL noon Sept. 9, 2020, NO REFUNDS AFTER Sept. 9.**

**WALK-INS ALWAYS WELCOME, BUT NO HANDOUTS WILL BE AVAILABLE**

NAME (Only 1 name per form) \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY, \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE \_\_\_\_\_ E-MAIL ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

IS THIS FIRST SCHOOL ATTENDED? Yes/NO      MASTER GARDENER? Yes/NO

NAME OF FGC (if a member) \_\_\_\_\_

I do \_\_\_\_ do not \_\_\_\_ want a handout for this course.

Unless checked, we may use your name, address, telephone and e-mail above to contact you with National Garden Clubs, Inc. information, including future Gardening Schools. \_\_\_\_\_

Class \$55 \_\_\_\_\_ Class + test \$60 \_\_\_\_ Class + refresh \$60 \_\_\_\_\_. Refreshing is available only to those already Gardening Consultants.

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO GARDENING SCHOOL and mail to AdaMae Lewis, State Chair for Gardening School, 122 Russell Avenue, Ames IA 50010, Phone 515-290-3169, **E-mail [adamaelewis@gmail.com](mailto:adamaelewis@gmail.com)**

## GARDENING QUESTIONS:

To date I have had no response from our readers in regard to a gardening question or the sharing of an answer to a question that has been posed. Thus, I am assuming that readers are not interested in being part of my regular articles. As a result, I will be sharing tidbits of gardening information that you might find interesting.

Helpful Heloise in her daily column shared this idea. Before potting a plant, place a coffee filter in the bottom of the pot. This keeps the dirt from escaping through the drainage hole. Then fill half of the pot with shredded paper followed by your appropriate potting soil. She goes on to say that by doing this you are recycling the paper that often goes into the trash. I think there might be an added benefit to following this practice. The paper would absorb water and thus you might not have to water as often. My son did a similar project for his science fair project many years ago and placed second at the regional competition. Evidently the project had merit in the eyes of the judges.

I encourage you to try this approach to planting and then let me know what happened. We will all be part of a science fair experiment. Good luck. I shall be anxious to hear from you.

*In these uncertain times enjoy the blessings of the day.*

Walt Reemtsma, FGCI President-Elect  
presby1mom@gmail.com (515) 341-1052 (c)

## Wildlife in the Summer

Protect wildlife by making responsible personal choices. Take steps to save wildlife by maintaining habitats, planting pollinator gardens, and installing bird feeders and bird, bat and bee houses.

Help wildlife stay wild, in the wild. Don't store or leave pet food outdoors. Feed pets inside. Cover or secure garbage to keep wildlife out. Don't feed wildlife (other than using a bird feeder for birds), especially in a way that makes them comfortable around humans. Make environmentally friendly choices at home.

Shirley Wolf, Backyard Wildlife Habitat Chairman

*Bird feeder hint: An inexpensive Slinky® on a shepherd's hook prevents rodents from the climbing pole to eat bird food. Stretch the Slinky® from top of hook and let it hang loose mid to bottom of pole so rodents are unable to get a foot-hold when their weight makes it bounce trying to climb up pole. Bird seed lasts much longer now!*

## GARDEN WHATNOT

Provide respite and sanctuary to insects by re-purposing a "Whatnot" shelf. Wooden Whatnot shelves can be found at garage sales and thrift stores. They come in a variety of designs and sizes.

Some shelves can easily be transformed into a shelter or 'bug hotel' for the little creepy crawlies in your garden. This project is meant to provide a temporary stop or place for insects to be safe from predators and inclement weather. It is not to provide a permanent home or habitat for the insects.

The Whatnot shelf can be painted and sealed with environmentally safe products. The shelf can be left as is with its original finish but it should be sealed to protect it from the elements. A back does not have to be added to the shelf.

Use pinecones, bark, sticks, shells, and bamboo in the cubbies of the shelf. Items can be glued (use environmentally safe glue) or stuffed tightly into the cubbies. Miniature flower pots can also be glued on the shelf adding a touch of whimsy.

Mount the Garden Whatnot on a fence, post, or wall in light shade.

Keep an eye on your Garden Whatnot and see who checks in.

Diane Bracke, Reduce, Reuse, Re-purpose Chairman



## ANEMONE patens L.



Anemone patens L. or Pulsatilla patens (American Pasqueflower, Prairie Smoke) is one of the earliest wildflower to bloom in late March to early May. Other common names are April fool, badger, Easter plant, gosling, hartshorn, wild crocus, windflower, rock lily, and prairie crocus. (Can you see why botanical names are so important?) It is a member of the buttercup family.

It is a spectacular flower that one can find soon after the winter snow has melted. The plant's grey/green stems are covered with tiny hairs. The long-stemmed basal leaves form a whorl just below the single flower. There may be 5-8 pale lavender to purple petal-like sepals up to 1 ½ inches long that are covered with long soft feathery hairs. The Pasqueflower prefers dry, rocky or gravelly sites in the tallgrass prairie from South to central Iowa and northern Illinois. It can be found growing on hill prairies in eastern Iowa. The plant can be overlooked as it 4-16 inches tall. Each seed is a long feather-like plume.

The seed is dispersed by the wind. A co-worker who had a farm in NE Iowa told me the woods on his farm were full of the Pasqueflower. What a treat that must have been to see them in bloom.

The Pasqueflower got its name because it blooms during the season of Passover and Lent. The name Anemone means wind in Greek. It may have gotten its name because it can be found in the early spring when the winds still howl from the winter. You might want to plant the Pasqueflower in a place where you won't forget where you put it. Later in the Spring the plant disappears and likely will be forgotten until it appears the next spring.

The plant was used by the Indians medicinally, although one wants to be careful in handling the plant as the juice is reported to cause blistering. The crushed leaves of this plant were used for the treatment of rheumatism and other achy ailments. The plant was used as a diuretic, a treatment for boils, burns and sore eyes. The dried powder of the plant was thought to speed the healing of wounds. However, caution must be used as the plant contains alkaloids that cause depression, nervousness, and an upset stomach.



European herbalists used the Pasqueflower for inducing menstruation, treating of sterility and infected ovaries. In Europe it was used for nervous exhaustion for various menstrual complaints. It was supposed to be especially effective if taken by blue-eyed, fair-haired women.

Information taken from "Wildflowers of the Tallgrass Prairie," "Prairie Plants," and "Tallgrass Prairie Wildflowers."  
Submitted by Darla Kickbush, Wildflower Chairman

### In memoriam: Ted Stueck

Fran Stueck lost her husband Ted Feb. 16, 2020 from cancer of the liver and spleen. He was an active member of the Vinton Garden Club. He enjoyed going to town to weed, deadhead, water and plant the club's projects. He will be missed tremendously.

I would like to thank FGCI members and friends for the memorials and cards I received. Hoping God is keeping your spirit positive during this time of social distancing.

*Fran Stueck*

New address; 1807 W 5th St., Apt. 309, Vinton, Iowa 52349-2476





# Invasive Plants - Velvetleaf *Abutilon theophrasti* (Mallow family)

Being a farm girl in Iowa, I had the “fun” of pulling the weeds in the corn and soybeans by hand back in the 1950’s. Even with gloves I found my fingers stained green. One weed which seemed very prolific was velvetleaf.

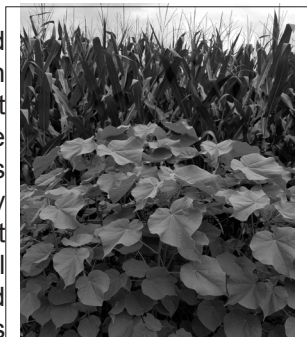
Velvetleaf is also known as velvet plant, buttonweed, Indian mallow and butterprint to name a few. It’s a member of the Malvaceae or mallow family and is native to Asia and came to America from India.

Velvetleaf grows 3-8 feet tall on branched stout stems. In Iowa it germinates in the spring and flowers in summer. The leaves are large, heart-shaped with a velvety look and have toothed margins. The leaves when crushed release an unpleasant odor which I remember to this day!

The flowers are sparingly produced and short-lived. Each yellow-orange flower is replaced by a fruit about ¾” across. It is initially light green, but rather quickly turns brown or black with maturity. This fruit consists of a ring of about 10-15 flattened seedpods. When the seeds are ready to be released, the outside of the capsule contains vertical slits which release mature seeds. Plants produce about 70 to 200 seed capsules per plant, and each capsule contains 35-45 seeds. Seeds can remain viable for 50 years when stored in a dry location or in the soil.

The nectar and pollen of the flowers attract various kinds of bees, including bumblebees, long-horned bees (*Melissodes* spp.), leaf-cutting bees (*Megachile* spp.), and Halictid bees. Small butterflies also like its nectar.

Habitats include cropland (particularly corn and soybean fields), abandoned fields, vacant lots, construction sites, and waste areas. Velvetleaf typically occurs where the soil has been recently disturbed and the long dormant seeds are brought close to the soil surface. Do not till or plow infested areas because this promotes seed germination. Since it’s a tall and lanky plant with large leaves, it’s easy to identify as really nothing else resembles it. All plant material should be carefully bagged and discarded with the garbage to avoid spreading the seeds.



In an outdoor emergency, the soft leaves can be used as a substitute for toilet paper. Do you suppose there will be a run on velvet leaf plants this summer?

## References:

Wikipedia

<https://www.illinoiswildflowers.info/weeds/plants/velvetleaf.htm>

<https://www.kingcounty.gov/services/environment/animals-and-plants/noxious-weeds/weed-identification/velvetleaf.aspx>

Jane Buck

Invasive Plant Chairman



## Hummingbirds “Flying Jewels”

Hummingbirds are amazing little birds that weigh 1/10th ounce. They can fly 600 miles nonstop and migrate up to 2000 miles. To attract hummingbirds use a red plastic feeder with sugar water: one part sugar to 4 parts water heat to dissolve the sugar and cool before filling. Do not use any red food coloring. Be sure to keep feeders clean, using small brushes to get into small areas. Clean 2 times a week in hot weather, once a week in cool weather. Use hot water or a weak vinegar solution. Avoid dish soaps they can leave a residue.

Feeders will attract, but flowering plants will entice them to linger in your garden and you will see all kinds of behaviors and high energy antics. Some sure fire plants to attract these beautiful little birds: flowers that are red, red orange and or tubular. Columbines, crocosmia, red bee balm, trumpet vines, salvias, cardinal flower, red flowering honey suckle, red zinnias, milkweed, butterfly weed, red hot poker are all inviting to these little birds. Also mint family plants have tubular flowers, and it does not matter how tiny the flowers are because a hummingbird can find them.

Use a feeder as a supplemental nectar source to help them through when there are not as many blooming flowers. In the fall leave feeders up for awhile after your birds have left, as there may be migratory hummingbirds that come through. I have seen several birds come through a couple weeks after the summer hummingbirds left, and they made use of the feeder spent the night, ate again in the morning and were gone.



Debbie Lewison, FGCI Bird Chairman

# Iowa Gardens of the Past

Lost and Historic Gardens of Iowa: 1850-1980 By Beth Cody



Perhaps like me, you're a gardener who also happens to be a history buff. Many of us are fascinated by vintage garden photos and beautiful old seed catalogs: they show what our grandparents' gardens looked like and the flowers they loved. I enjoy looking through books about the history of gardening -- the photos of impressive turn-of-the-century estates and lovely farm gardens are nostalgia-inducing.

That's because gardens are such ephemeral things: here today, gone tomorrow. Only photos remain, preserving fleeting moments of garden beauty, frozen in time for us to enjoy so many years later.

As a proud Iowan interested in our state's history, whenever I read garden history books, I always check in the index to see if any of the gardens happened to be located in Iowa. Sadly, they never are. Never.

I wondered: is that because Iowa didn't have any beautiful or impressive gardens? Sure, our grandparents had huge

vegetable gardens and a flower patch or two. But what about artistically designed gardens? Were Iowans incapable of making such beauty? Surely not! My curiosity -- and my Iowa pride -- were aroused.

So I began to look for vintage images of Iowa gardens: online, in historical library archives, in old magazine articles, in postcards and photos for sale on Ebay, and anywhere else.

And I discovered that Iowa has indeed had many lovely gardens that were preserved in fascinating vintage garden photos and illustrations.

Some of them were pretty impressive: Like the seven-block-long garden of J.C. Hubinger in Keokuk, or Joseph Bettendorf's 17-acre estate overlooking the Mississippi River.

But as I continued my research, I realized that it wasn't always the grandest gardens that were the most appealing -- often it was photos of proud gardeners in their modest flower gardens in small towns and on turn-of-the-century farms that were the most touching to me. Passionate Iowa gardeners of all backgrounds have made countless gardens of great beauty that we can be proud of as part of our state's history.

I discovered that a number of the gardens I found were created by well-known garden writers or horticultural entrepreneurs. Like Henry Field of Shenandoah, who started a seed company and founded the KFNF radio station -- and had magnificent display gardens around his radio building.

Field's sister, Helen Field Fischer, was a garden writer and broadcast the KFNF gardening program for twenty-five years. She and her daughter founded the American Hemerocallis Society to promote the daylily -- a plant few gardeners grew before WWII, but one that's now found in most Iowa gardens.

Numerous Iowans have been enthusiastic gardeners through our state's history:

- the earliest settlers who brought seeds and peony roots in their covered wagons
- the German and other settlers who arrived a bit later
- turn-of-the-century Iowans with their love of flower gardens
- the garden club mania that started in the 1920s (Iowa had over 200 garden clubs in the FGCI by the 1950s)
- to our own age, when we buy our seeds and plants on the internet -- but still love our flower gardens just as much as our grandmothers did

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It really should be no surprise – despite being overlooked by east-coast book publishers – that Iowans have been making beautiful gardens since the establishment of our state. How could it not be so? After all, Iowa is “A Place to Grow.”

**Beth Cody, who lives in Amish country south of Iowa City, is the author of *Iowa Gardens of the Past*, available at [lowagardens.com](http://lowagardens.com), [Amazon.com](http://Amazon.com) and Iowa gift shops.**

Photo below is of J.C. Hubinger's daughter, Keokuk, IA



## CONTAINER PLANTS - GO ORGANIC

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My grandfather used this same recipe potting mix to grow his family wholesale/retail greenhouse operation into one of the most successful in the Midwest. I am blessed to have learned so many things from him. The memories of time spent working in the greenhouses including pasteurizing the soil with steam for transplanting all of the vegetable and bedding plants, potting roses, Easter lilies, acres of poinsettias, mums, azaleas and every beautiful plant imaginable is the inspiration to bring this simple, proven, quality potting soil mix to those who will settle only for the best.



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We are a small family owned business in Saylorville, Iowa. Our roots run deep in the area and our love for horticulture and the people who share that passion is our dream. Please contact us if have any questions. We are Iowa friendly!

Gary & Sue Ellen Godwin, [GodwinGrowers@gmail.com](mailto:GodwinGrowers@gmail.com) 515-240-2333 (Gary Cell)

# Producing Black Gold Legally

After many years of trial and error gardening, the most important lesson I have learned is that just digging a hole, planting the plant and giving it plenty of water and keeping weeds out is not enough. But Black Gold, in the form of compost, is key.



In an old issue of The Iowa Horticulturalist an article by Stacie Johnston states that compost is a “structure builder, biological cultivator, and a nutrient stabilizer. It regenerates and rejuvenates tired soil.” It is helpful in clay or sandy soils. Compost provides beneficial microbes, and helps to maintain stable moisture levels in the soil. Compost is not a fertilizer, but helps build soil structure.

The key things to keep in mind are the following: (1) any pile of organic material will compost given enough time (2) denser materials take longer to compost (3) chopping or shredding organic matter will decrease the composting time (4) do NOT compost animal fat, grease, butter, dairy, bread, mayonnaise or diseased plant material (5) do compost grass clippings, leaves, veggie peels, spent flower blooms, plant material, coffee and coffee filters.

The two methods of composting will result in the same product. Hot composting is faster, but has significant requirements. The optimum size is the space of a 3 foot cube, constructed of any material you can imagine, placed directly on the ground. It requires layering: 4-6 inches of green organic material, then 4-6 inches of brown organic material followed by a one inch layer of soil. Repeat the layers to fill the cube. Water, and turn the pile weekly and this process should heat the pile to 140 degrees and kill any weed seeds.

The alternative method of composting (the way I use) is less restrictive, and is called leaf mold, or cold composting. The size of the pile of organic material does not matter. It is good to add some soil if you can as this will provide microbes to aid the decomposition process. Rain could provide the needed water, and turning is not key. This process will take longer than the hot composting process described above. Cold composting will not kill weed seed.

Sandy Quam,  
a Lazy Composter!



# Note from FGCI Historian:

This past winter I was asked if I could research information about someone's grandmother who had been a garden club member during the 1940's-1970's. I started out doubting I'd find very much, but was pleased to have found Mrs. John Loughlin's name in numerous places (she was a flower show instructor, participated in test garden project with ISU, and served in numerous positions on the FGCI board). What I enjoyed the most was reading short articles about clubs and activities during that time. Projects that were started in the early years of garden clubs are ones we still do today. Not because we haven't grown as an organization, but because there was and still is a need for these types of projects.

The first is garden therapy. Gardeners have always understood that we are part of nature and being connected with nature is important to our well being. We still do similar garden therapy projects at nursing homes and with children, caring for community gardens and beautification of our communities. Since we can't visit nursing homes and assisted living homes right now, please try to send a card every week or so and drop off flowers for residents' enjoyment.

The first major project garden clubs worked on was “Victory Gardens.” FGCI was formed during World War I and victory gardens where important contribution to the cause. At this time I think contributing to the cause is another ‘victory gardens’ moment. Do you participate in “Plant-a-Row” for food pantries? Or share produce from your garden with friends or someone who needs to stretch their food budget? Although I now have mostly shade in by garden, this year I'm planting a few extra vegetables. Spots with full sun are at a premium here, but after moving a few plants, there is a little more space with enough sunshine to add a few more vegetable plants. We still won't be able to plant a row of extra produce, but there will be enough to share with the single mother next door and a few older friends who can no longer garden.

How many people will FGCI members be able to help in 2020? Please let us know how you are helping during this unsettling time.

Sandra Gossman, FGCI Historian  
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## ***Moving? Change of Address?***

To ensure continued delivery of the NEWS be sure to send your new address to the state treasurer:

Cynthia Berkland  
3216 510th Ave,  
Cylinder, IA 50528  
712-424-3168  
Cynthiaberkland54@gmail.com



## DISTRICT AND CLUB NEWS

### **District I: Brenda Emick-Herring**

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**Keokuk Garden Club** reported that club activities came to a screeching halt this spring. They met in early March and listened to a program on garden totems. They continued to make progress in their Rand Park plans. They raised their 5 ft butterfly sculpture seven feet above the butterfly bed and placed a memorial plaque beside their blue star marker to honor one of their members. They also cleaned beds in the park. Members are staying connected with their Facebook page and enjoying working in their own gardens.

**Keosauqua Town & Country Garden Club** met in March for the first time this year. They heard a report from three members who had attended the Henry County Master Gardener Symposium in Mt. Pleasant and reviewed their flower show called, "Remember When," which will be held in July. They are celebrating their 50th year as a club and still have a charter member in the club. As activities for April were suspended, they plan to meet in May with a picnic lunch at a park and then a trip to a local greenhouse. They hope to take a field trip to Des Moines to tour the Botanical Gardens and have their annual plant.

**Muscatine Garden Club** realized they would need great flexibility in the spring of 2020 due to the world's health concerns (COVID 19). Their calendar included an annual joint plant sale with CVIDS and Master Gardeners in May. They also hoped to learn about Shade Plant Combinations, Helping Winter Bird Populations, Dyeing Silk with Plant Material, and Arm Chair Traveling via club members sharing photos/stories of their travels abroad. They planned to travel to Lake Darling State Park and the Vander Veer Conservancy and nurseries.

**Tipton Federated Garden Club** members communicated via emails since spring meetings were canceled. They enjoyed answering President Terri Ewers project question, "What brings you joy" in relation to gardening. They maintained social distancing staying 6' apart as they worked on tending two community gardens and mulched trees at the elementary and middle school in Tipton. They will reschedule their April program by going to their local greenhouse, which has new owners, to learn of summer annual/perennials and changes made thus far in their business in May or early June.

### **District II: [Co-directors]**

**Ruth Hamilton**, 2026 Pine Creek Ave., Independence, IA 50644  
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### **Shirley Bergman**

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**Independence Garden Club:** The new year and decade is in full swing as the new officers regrouped in January. Club member Ruth Hamilton researched and gave the February Hydrangea program, as the scheduled speaker was unable to come. A big thank you to Ruth! The March program and lunch at the assisted living facility was cancelled. They had planned to dye eggs using natural grown plant dyes and share the eggs in baskets with the residents. The plan for April was to make seed balls at the Senior Center. Golf-ball sized balls made of powdered clay, potting soil, and water are mixed and rolled into a variety of seeds. The balls are tossed into a wildflower or native plant area where the seeds will germinate.

**Quasqueton Garden Club:** January was their annual program book cover workshop. It is always fun to see the creative arrangements that can be made with dried materials. "Low Maintenance Gardening" was the topic for February. Guest speaker Christina Pillard of Black Earth Landscaping, Aurora, Iowa, had all of us enthusiastic about digging in the dirt. Unfortunately, the field trip to hear author and nationally known garden speaker Melinda Meyers was cancelled. April plans are also in jeopardy.

**Floralia Arrangers Guild, Van Horne** planned no meetings in January or February. The March and April meetings were foiled by the COVID-19 pandemic. Planned programs hoped to address dividing perennials, planting and planning for drought and rain, trimming shrubs and trees, and making birch wreaths.

**Vinton Garden Club** does not officially meet January through March. With the COVID-19 virus and social distancing, the club is planning community projects in Vinton parks, the fairground, and local gardens, and is working on the flower show schedule for June 26-28. Vinton Club has two Master Gardeners and one Lifetime (Master) member. In February they lost an active member, Ted Stueck, who loved gardening chores and planting spring annuals. The club had a

tremendous response to the NGC poetry contest. 119 creative entries from Tilford and Shellsburg Elementary classrooms made judging difficult. Two entries advanced to national competition! Smokey Bear/Woodsy Owl Poster Contest garnered 197 entries, 116 of whom were the first-grade students.

**Good Earth Garden Club**, Cedar Rapids newsletter The Pollinator reminded members that plants and flowers positively affect a patient's physical health and lower pain and anxiety. Also, to avoid pruning problems, trim early and when the plant is young. Good pruning tips include cutting back each stem to a side branch or bud. Pruning to buds pointing to the outside result in more desirable branching so that new shoots will not grow through the interior or be as likely to crisscross. Open a woody plant by pruning some of the center growth and by cutting back terminals to buds that point outward. Shape the tree and remove "bad" branches. Although some trees require little pruning, some, such as the Silver Maple and Japanese Flowering Crabapple, need lots of attention. The height of the lowest branches is determined by the tree's purpose. Is it a screen, windbreak, or street tree?

**Town & Country, Decorah**, is celebrating their club's 66th anniversary of being organized. They enjoyed Jed Becker's "Busy as a Bee" program in January; "Landscaping Design" by Robin Sailor in February; and in March Keith Kovarik's talk about "What's New in 2020" and "How about Hydrangeas?" To increase members' understanding in flower design using various backgrounds, demonstrations of "Winter Ice", "The Warmth of a Fire", and "March Wind" were given. An outing to the Benjegerdes Greenhouse in April was cancelled due to the pandemic.

### **District III: Bonnie Handsaker**

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**Cedar Falls Garden Club** met in March for their traditional beginning year brunch. We had a very nice time and enjoyed being with our friends again. We reviewed the meeting plans for the year. In April their plan was to do spring clean-up in our Post Office garden. Like everyone else, they don't know what is ahead, but we are all in it together.

**Radcliffe Better Homes and Gardens Club** Board met in January to plan the

calendar year. February meeting was scheduled to be the first meeting to review the calendar but weather did not permit. Meeting was moved to March which resulted in the March guest meeting "A Blast from the Past" being cancelled. April was scheduled to visit a local greenhouse but corona virus changed that. What is ahead for May is to refurbish the crosses for veterans' graves in the local cemetery. It remains to be seen how they will handle this. On a brighter note, the Mini-park has daffodils blooming and a carpet of violas.

**Green Thumb Garden Club, Northwood,** met in January to review our 2020 yearbook. In February Cheryl Nitcher gave an excellent program of a framed art collage done on a framed cotton canvas. She used small trimmed branches from her trees and other natural things to create a charming stick cottage. The Flower show schedule, "Holiday Celebrations" was reviewed in hopes the fair and state meeting are not cancelled. They practiced social distancing in March so no meeting was held.

**Swaledale Federated Garden Club** met for the first meeting of the year in February. The yearbook was reviewed for the upcoming year with the theme of "Tree Time". Terri Ewers reported on Evergreen trees for our North Iowa area and Deb S. had a small quiz for everyone. Some of the upcoming events for the year include the annual plant sale in May, hosting the State Show in June, and visiting member's gardens as well as Clear Lake's Central Gardens. The annual small Flower Show will be held in September, and a special Christmas Tree event is planned for December. It should be a good year!

**District IV, V & VII: Lois Boeyink**  
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**Ackworth Garden Club** The January meeting installed new officers and the scheduled program was Flower Power: Tips & Tricks. This included propagation and seed starting ideas. Planning for our Plant Sale and co-hosting the District IV, V, VII meeting began. February program was presented by Michelle Balmer, IDNR, about planting natives. March and April meetings, Youth Container Garden Class, and Plant Sale were cancelled due to the pandemic. They hope to meet and tour the Brownie Park project in Norwalk in May.

**Afton Garden Club** is busting out to get started on a new project at the East Union School in Afton, Iowa. The club is working with the superintendent and staff to make a "Healing" Garden in the courtyard of the

school. As the school grew, the building made an open square in the center with large glass windows on all four sides. A waterfalls system has been installed, along with a wooden walkway. The Club has a clean slate to plan the landscape which includes two turtles that have residence. Youth project for the club is collaborating with the Union County Fair and the 4-H clubs, choosing a theme for the buckets kids will decorate. 4-H kids will care for the buckets, with the club furnishing plants and helping them plant. The buckets will be judged by the public during the fair. In February Bonnie Morris' program on air quality gave all of members a new perspective on how they could do some creative things: like putting a furnace air filter on the back of a portable fan for better air quality. In March, Sandy Rollings talked about butterflies and gave interesting facts. Birds will not eat a butterfly because they have a bad taste. Sandy talked about the life cycle of the butterflies. The club welcomed 2 new members.

**Ames Garden Club** is on hold until members can get out and enjoy each other's company and learn something new. Presently they hope to visit some interesting gardens this summer and have garden art project planned. The club cancelled the March and April meetings. If they can hold the May meeting it will be in a member's garden with lawn chairs 6 ft. apart. Plant sale was cancelled in favor of a member plant trade/share. In the meantime, they are keeping busy in their gardens.

**Baxter Garden Club** met March 2. A program was presented on raised bed gardening. Members discussed the new yearbooks, committee sign-up sheets, planter plants, Arbor Day tree planting, after school programs for kids in May, and ideas for the 150-year Baxter celebration and garden classes in Madrid. Information was also shared on the Penny Pine Project.

**Greater Des Moines Garden Club** does not meet in January, and their only meeting this year was February 27, when Sandy Quam, current FGCI Judges' Council head and Master Judge presented "Through the Eyes of a Judge". It was a very interesting program. They were ready for the annual flower show at the Varied Industries Building, Iowa State Fair Grounds, Des Moines, as a part of the Flower, Lawn and Garden Show. The theme for this year was, "Dancing the 50's Once More." The Show was to be judged on March 19 and open to the public March 20-22. With programs printed, merchandise bought, work schedule complete, members set to do designs, and horticulture selected, the Show unfortunately was cancelled due to the Corona Virus.

**Highland Park Garden Club** held a potluck dinner in January. The new yearbooks were passed out and discussed. The May Mothers' Day plant sale has not been cancelled as of April, but it is being considered.

**Kellogg Garden Club** has postponed the tea scheduled for April 18. A tentative date for the tea is July 25. Their March meeting was cancelled also. Flowers are poking their heads through the ground. Members will soon fill in empty spaces with annuals and pull the weeds in the public beds.

**Knoxville Garden Club** was sad to cancel 'Garden Gala' #19, April 4, 2020. Please SAVE THE DATE, APRIL 3, 2021. Refunds were mailed the end March. They have received returned checks asking us to reserve a spot next year as Gala is always a must in the spring. One gardener responded, with, "Keep this, the butterflies need to eat, too." Gardeners are a great bunch. Due to the CO VID 19 pandemic they did not meet in April and May. Nila informs us the garden center will open April 13. She has a shipment of trees and shrubs in now. Cold weather annuals will arrive shortly. They try to stay in touch on Facebook, email, and "good old" telephone. A long-time 'superb' gardener whose husband is in the nursing home is finding her own garden therapy while she can't visit. She has taken pictures of her garden over the years and even has them in albums. She has been looking at them and enjoying how her garden has changed and remembering the plants she once had, but had to get rid of because of space or habit. Gardening can be therapy even before the flowers bloom. The Bessie Spaur Butterfly Garden is in need of spring cleaning. We are urging members to do what they can.

**Pella Garden Club** Greetings, everyone, from Pella Garden Club! The sun is shining, magnolia trees are blooming, and the tulips are popping! As many may now know, the Pella Tulip Time Festival has been cancelled for only the second time ever. The first time was during World War II. Because of all the uncertainty with what is going on, members have chosen not to sell tulip bulbs this year. They will be back in 2021! This was a very difficult decision to make, but members know it is in everyone's best interest. They have also decided not to have their annual June Garden Party. June may allow for tours of club member gardens.

**Urbandale Garden Club** participated in January at the Urbandale Library's Volunteer Fair for local nonprofits. Members visited with the public attending about our club's programs and projects. They did manage to get in three programs this year:



January was "Recycling: It's Our Future," presented by the Metro Waste Authority; February "What's Happening in Urbandale Parks" program by the Parks & Rec Director; and in March a member of the Des Moines Herb Study Group presented "What to do with Lemon Flavored Herbs." The annual combined meeting scheduled for April with the Greater Des Moines and Highland Park clubs was cancelled, but we hope to reschedule it later this year.

**Woodland Hills Garden Club.** After no meetings in January and February, the club met March 9 at the Pleasant Hill Library. Heath Ellis with Pleasant Hill Parks and Recreation gave a demo on tree pruning. They had planned to be outside, but it was cold and rainy that night. Heath brought a tarp and branches and showed us Pruning 101 inside. The April meeting was going to be at Busy Bee Garden Center, but it was canceled due to Covid-19. Two members are still in Florida due to travel restrictions. They will see what May brings.

#### **District VI: Shirley Wolf**

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**Fort Dodge Federated Garden Club** had an interesting program in January from the Fort Dodge museum speaker about making a terrarium. In February, Jeff Becker gave a program on flowers most pests don't like. In March they had a meeting for those who felt comfortable coming, without a speaker. Our main concern was "what IF" we can't have a meeting in April, a plant sale, or annual garden tour. When this is printed hopefully things will be back on schedule. The club started something different this year with different members giving a tip on flower shows. The first month was "Selecting Basic Jars and Containers" by Judith Walrod. In February Jan Krass shared "What to Carry in Your Flower Show Tool Kit." In March Sela Bryhne explained "How to Groom House Plants for a Show." **Estherville Garden Club** had a floral demonstration by Vikki Alvaray of HyVee in January. Several club members attended a garden seminar led by Keven Feha, instructor in the Iowa Lakes Community College attendance center in Emmetsburg in February. The February program, "Vertical Gardening" was given by members Evelyn Prentice and Judy Lastine. The meeting for March was cancelled because of Covid-19.

**Palo Alto Garden Club** As does Mother Nature, the Palo Alto Garden Club takes a

well-earned break in January and February. We began our year on March 10 with a two-pronged program. One member spoke about the new 2020 varieties of Proven Winners flowers, whetting our appetites and getting us all in the mood for spring. A second member gave a program on how to attract (or discourage) bees to your yard. They also finalized arrangements for the District VI spring meeting. Sadly, shortly after that, they determined that it was necessary to cancel the meeting for this year and reschedule it for next April and cancel the regularly scheduled meeting for April. The May meeting is also in question, but eventually we will pick up our lives again and resume club activities.

#### **District VIII: Victoria Rute**

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**Clay County Federated Garden Club** held the first meeting for the year in March, at Del's Garden Center, Outdoor Elements Studio in Spencer. Todd Brockshus gave the program, telling about all the new and exciting annuals, perennials for both shade and sun, shrubs, trees and evergreens. April meeting was cancelled to support the state's efforts in combatting COVID-19. In May, they plan to tour the Spirit Lake Fish Hatchery, followed by a meeting at Snappers Turtle Bay Café. June meeting will be demonstrations by members, "What's new in Designs", focusing on Parallel Design. The National Garden Week is celebrated by club members accenting several of the art works exhibited at Arts On Grand, with floral designs. Annual Garden Tour will be held June 26, 5:30 – 8:00 p.m. Starting point is the Main Entrance to the Event Center, located at the north end of the Fair Grounds. Cost is free will donation. (Rain date, June 27). The July 14 meeting will be hosted by the Marske's at their beautiful home and "Butterfly Gardens."

**Floyd Valley Federated Garden Club** did not meet in January. In February they learned about hardy mums from Sue Becker, and in March, long-time rose grower and award winner Frank Summerside gave a talk on "How to Grow Roses Successfully". Unfortunately we had to cancel our April meeting and district meeting in LeMars, due to the Covid-19 virus. Plant sale is scheduled in May.

## **Bee Hotels**

As president of the Town and Country Garden Club in 2019, I was blindsided by a sudden illness and consequent death of my husband after ten months of suffering. All of the Town and Country Garden Club members stepped right up and did what had to be done when I was unable to fulfill my duties. Of course I wanted to show my appreciation to them in some way.

I had seen information on bee hotels in some publication and so when two of our children and our five grandchildren were home for Thanksgiving, we made these hotels. A friend of mine had just lost a large limb out of his apple tree so he chunked up that limb into 15 sections. Then my family went to my husband's shop and drilled 20 - 25 holes in each chunk. I then made fabric straps to hang them by or they can be placed in the crotch of a tree, on top of a wood pile or wherever it works. My family had a good time making them and hopefully the bees will find and use them.

Karen Guttebo (lkguttebo@live.com)



*Garden hint: Before planting a potted plant, submerge the plant in a bucket of water for about ten minutes to completely hydrate the inner roots.*

NEWS of the  
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