



K-STATE
 Research and Extension
Master Gardener

What's Growing On...

The latest news from the
 Marais des Cygnes Extension Master Gardeners

SEPTEMBER 2016 | 104 S. Brayman St., Paola, KS 66071 | 913-294-4306 | www.maraisdescygn.es.ksu.edu

September Calendar

- 6– Trial Garden Workday 8:00 am
 Extension Office Garden Workday 9:00 am
- 7– Courthouse Gardens Workday 8:00 am
- 13– Trial Garden Workday 8:00 am
 Extension Office Garden Workday 9:00 am
 Monthly Advisory Board Meeting 10:00 am
- 14– Courthouse Gardens Workday 8:00 am
- 16– New Class & Mentor Meeting 1:00 pm
- 20– Trial Garden Workday 8:00 am
 Extension Office Garden Workday 9:00 am
 New Class Starts Training 9:00 am
- 21– Courthouse Gardens Workday 8:00 am
- 27– New Class & Mentor Meeting 1:00 pm
- 28– Trial Garden Workday 8:00 am
 Extension Office Garden Workday 9:00 am
 New Class Training & JOCO Extension 9:00 am
- 29– Miami County Ag Day
- 30– Advanced Training Conference at K-State
- October 1**–Advanced Training Conference at K-State

2017 Garden Tour

A huge thanks to Jan Thompson and Betsy Hasselquist for agreeing to co-chair the 2017 Garden Tour. Planning is underway for the September 2017 garden tour. Date TBA. They are seeking suggestions of unique, well-loved, prospective gardens in town and in the countryside for consideration. Does not need to be a master gardener's garden. Location will be a factor in choosing gardens. Please spread the word and e-mail or text Jan and Betsy with your garden suggestions with name, address and contact information as soon as possible. Jan: jkg.thompson@gmail.com; 913-579-4150
 Betsy: bjbniangua@yahoo.com; 913-244-2265

Class of 2017

We are thrilled to have nine members in the class of 2017! Their training begins on September 20th and wraps up on November 22.

Master Gardener State Conference

Information about the Master Gardener State Conference was sent out a couple weeks ago. It is also included as a separate PDF in the email message from which you accessed this newsletter. If you plan to attend, registration has been extended to September 9. If there is a group interested in attending, we can coordinate travel and potentially take a county van. Please let Megan know by September 9 if you plan to attend the conference so that vehicle and hotel arrangements can be made.

Miami County Ag Day

This year's Miami County Ag Day will be held on Thursday, September 29th from 9:00 – 2:00 at the Miami County Fairgrounds. Approximately 400 Miami



At the Paola Farmers Market

County 4th graders will be attending the event. We are responsible for a 12 minute presentation about plants, to be given approximately 15 times throughout the day. The specific topic for the program is up for discussion. So if you are interested in teaching this lesson or have any great ideas for the topic, please let Megan know by September 15th.

2017 Advanced Trainings

It's time to start planning for next year and we need your input. Please make sure to submit any advanced training topic ideas that you have. We want to make sure the classes represent a variety of interests and we can't do that without your help. Chances are if you would be interested in learning more about a topic, others might be as well. Please send any topic suggestions that you have to Megan (mwesterhold@ksu.edu) by September 23rd. After all the ideas are collected we will send out a survey to determine the level of interest in each topic and start planning programs for next year.

September's Insect: Praying Mantids, the Ultimate Predators

Lenora Larson

Introduction: *Insects are a part of every gardener's life. Each month in this newsletter you'll meet a common insect with advice on whether you should eradicate, tolerate or embrace this six-legged visitor.*

The name "Praying Mantis" refers to the upright posture of the raptorial forelegs, which is ironic because these arms have one purpose: killing. Mantids sit immobile, camouflaged in green or tan, and can turn their heads to gaze intently at potential victims. When a suitable meal strolls into reach, they grab it with lightning speed and eat the yummy parts bite by bite. They then fastidiously lick and clean their forearms and face like a cat.

Identification of Our Native and Naturalized Citizens

Two species share our gardens: the native Carolina Mantis and the much larger Chinese Mantis, which was imported 75 years ago for "pest control." They quickly naturalized, eliminating our native Mantis in many areas. The adults have wings and are easily differentiated by size and color. (See photos). Both avidly hunt other arthropods such as insects and spiders. However, the Chinese Mantid can also eat mice, lizards and snakes. YouTube videos of them catching and eating hummingbirds horrify bird-lovers. The hunter becomes the prey when mantids are eaten by birds, reptiles and omnivorous mammals.

Sexual Cannibalism

Mantids mate in fall with an elaborate courtship dance that identifies the male as a suitor rather than a meal. Tales abound of the



An adult Carolina Mantis is dusty brown and no larger than two inches.



An adult Chinese Mantid is four inches long with tan wings covering a green body.



The Carolina Mantis's egg case is flat and almond-shaped.



The Chinese Mantid egg case looks like a burned marshmallow!

females eating the male as part of the mating ritual; however, this rarely happens in the wild. Most males successfully perform the mating dance and only die after they've dispensed their sperm to multiple partners.

The early reports of sexual cannibalism may be an artifact of interfering scientists in the lab! In October, the female lays her eggs in a frothy liquid that hardens to form a protective shell, the ootheca. Then she dies and the juvenile mantids emerge in mass the following spring; their first meal is usually a brother or sister.

Friend or Foe?

Mantids eat both pests and beneficial insects, so they are considered "neutral" rather than beneficial. Gardeners can purchase Mantis egg cases to release in their gardens as an "organic insect control." Once again, you have wasted money on false hopes because the emerging mantids eat each other and then disperse, often dining on desirable insects like Monarch butterflies. Some gardeners choose to protect the natives and kill the Chinese mantids, but I cherish them both, despite their murderous ways.

Photos by Lenora Larson