What’s Growing On...

The latest news from the Marais des Cygnes Extension Master Gardeners

JANUARY 2019 | 104 S. Brayman St., Paola, KS 66071 | 913-294-4306 | www.maraisdescygenes.ksu.edu

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Donna Cook & Susan Thompson
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Susan Thompson & Jeannie Trail
Plant Sale
Sondra Dela Cruz & Lenora Larson
Publicity
Judy Moser & Lenora Larson
Seeds for Kids
Jane McLaughlin
MiCo Fair Superintendents
Chet McLaughlin & Michael Poss
Pat Trachsel & Sue Burns
New Recruits/Mentors
Jan Thompson & Betsy Hasselquist
Newspaper Articles
Katelyn Barthol, Extension Agent

NEWS & NOTES

• The office must have your Awards Dinner reservations and payment by January 15.

• The pending purchase of the Ursuline grounds and buildings has been canceled and a new buyer is being sought. Back to square one.

• May 4 is the date for the 2019 Touch-A-Truck event.

• Cathy Stainbrook is organizing a private MdC EMG-only garden tour in Linn County. We will be visiting the gardens of our fellow EMGs to the south! Details to be announced.

• Approval has been granted for the gazebo project to proceed at the southwest corner of the Courthouse starting in spring. Because the building is on the National Historic Register, the process has been slow. Historically appropriate fencing has been salvaged from the basement of the Historical Society for the perimeter, and barberry bushes will be planted around it.

• Betsy Hasselquist’s December article on Eastern Red Cedars was well-received. Lenora Larson would like to add that the native evergreen is the host plant for the Juniper Hairstreak, pictured at above.

• Send your 2019 Roster contact information changes or corrections to Katelyn at kbarth25@ksu.edu.

JANUARY 22
Annual Master Gardener Awards Dinner, Town Square Event Center in Paola.

MARCH 2
Annual Symposium, Town Square Event Center, Paola. See page 5 for info.

APRIL 9
2Q General Meeting and Game Night.

APRIL 25-26-27
Plant Sale. SAVE THE DATES—WE NEED YOU!

Board meetings are the 2nd Tuesday of each month, 9:30 am, Paola office.
Newsletter deadline is noon on the following Friday.
For the Love of Gardening
Exploring the Benefits of Gardening: Physical, Intellectual, Emotional, Spiritual
Gardening nurtures the body, mind and soul

By Betsy Hasselquist

Gardening can be a simple hobby, a plant in your window, a vegetable garden or flower bed, a lifestyle or passion in limitless forms. Gardens are unique, ever changing and can be as unpredictable as the weather.

Part 1: Physical Benefits of Gardening: Health, Nutritional & Environmental Blessings...

Exercise:
Gardening moves one to get out-of-doors, into nature, moving. It’s actually an enjoyable, productive form of exercise. Activities might encompass digging, tilling, planting, mulching, hoeing, pruning, picking, etc. While unloading a load of compost, my granddaughter proudly stated, “We’re in the poop business.”

The benefits of walking/exercise include increased cardiovascular and pulmonary fitness; reduced risk of heart disease and stroke; weight loss; improved management of hypertension and high cholesterol, joint and muscle pain and stiffness, osteoporosis, type II diabetes; energy, mood and relaxation.

Perusing your gardens for whatever reason, enjoying the wonders, retrieving forgotten tools, fortifying yourself with fluids and for me, watering, entails lots of walking. Getting up and down keeps one flexible, lubricates the joints, works the muscles. Squatting is really good, building whole body strength. These various activities/contortions can be aerobic (or not), strengthening, improve balance and enhance ADLs (Activities of Daily Living).

Precautions:
Don’t over-do it. Avoid overexertion in hot weather, stay hydrated and take breaks in the shade. Remember to use good body mechanics to avoid injury. Try some gentle stretching before heading out into the garden. Sunlight is our body’s primary source of Vitamin D which helps prevent osteoporosis, cancer and depression. However, too much sunlight can cause skin cancer, so it’s important to use sunscreen and protective clothing.

Food for thought:
Growing fruits and vegetables is so rewarding. For a healthy nutritious diet, eat a variety of fruits and vegetables (colors) daily. To improve one’s diet, try increasing your intake of fruits and vegetables, which can also help with weight control. Recommendations include eating 5-6 servings of vegetables (one serving equals 1 cup leafy greens, ½ cup of cooked or chopped other vegetables or ¾ cup juice) and 2-4 servings of fruit (one serving equivalent to 1 medium apple or orange, ½ cup of chopped, cooked or canned fruit or ¾ cup juice) daily OR make ½ your plate fruits and vegetables.

Sustainable gardening, growing organic food is healthier, free of pesticides, herbicides, GMOs, artificial fertilizers and irradiation, provides enhanced antioxidants, and saves money. Organic or not, fresh produce provides enhanced vitamins, minerals, fiber and great taste. There’s nothing better than eating a vine-ripened tomato or other garden delight right out of the garden. Your family and friends benefit and appreciate the fruits of your labor. Support your local farmers’ market.

The Bigger Picture:
Plants, landscaping, gardening sustain the world. Gardening can increase community food access and improve the environment. The MdC EMG trial garden provides fresh produce for our community, the Osawatomie farmers’ market (Osawatomie lost their grocery store) and Our Father’s House, a homeless shelter in Paola for families. Community gardening provides opportunities for folks to experience the benefits of gardening as well provide food for those in need.

Plants, photosynthesis, converting light into chemical energy, helps decrease carbon dioxide and generate oxygen. Local foods are fresher, tastier and more nutritious, decrease transportation costs and that environmental foot print. Organic gardening decreases ground water pollutants and increases natural terrain for pollinators. Sustainable gardening also encompasses composting. Plants reduce erosion, create habitats, promote ecological balance and biodiversity.

Gardening can improve your health and the world’s.
We reap what we sow. ✿
Thus, I have a new pair every year and at this point the 20 year cost is only $5 each. Rarely do I pull out any other implement because these powerful scissors are versatile multi-taskers.

“Obviously, they cut stems and even branches up to 1/4” so they work for dead-heading and pruning. For garden clean-up, they easily chop my ornamental grasses and other debris into mulch; they are efficient weeder, plunging into the soil to lift out the roots. And each spring, I put in over 1,000 new plants using only my Cutco Shears to dig the holes. Since I hope to garden at least another 20 years, the lifetime cost of my shears will be $2.50 each. Such a deal for the perfect tool!”

Lenora’s Favorite Gardening Tool: Cutco Super Shears™

“When we moved to Kansas from Detroit in 1981, I was a botanist with no gardening experience. But we bought a farm and my husband’s gardening expertise quickly inspired me.

“Through trial and error, I finally discovered the perfect tool for my tiny hands: a pair of kitchen shears. However, cheap scissors do not stay sharp and the handle snaps within two months. A $100 pair of Cutco Super Shears™ came to the rescue 20 years ago. What, spending $100 for a pair of scissors!? No problem, because Cutco has a lifetime guarantee and free sharpening. So once a year, I send back the aging pair for “sharpening” and invariably Cutco simply replaces the shears.

Cutco Super Shears™, Catalog #77R for the red-handled model. 83/8” total length. The blades come apart for easy cleaning and sharpening.

The Gardens at Wendwood

A private MdC EMG event is being planned for June 1, 2019, at the Gardens of Wendwood, a fabulous private garden more than 30 years in the making that Debbie Kitchell has managed for 20 years. Mark June 1 on your calendar now, as it is going to be an unforgettable experience!
A true bug and a member of the Assassin Bug family, Wheel Bugs are formidable predators against other insects and are considered “beneficial” although Honey Bees, Lady Bugs and Butterfly caterpillars are on their menu. One of the largest true bugs, the adult females grow up to 1.5” long while the males are puny in comparison. This means that a courting male must be very clear in stating his intentions as a mate rather than a meal to a hungry female. He bribes her with a bridal gift of a yummy insect to distract her while he climbs on to get the job done.

As true bugs, the Wheel Bugs’ lifestyle is “Incomplete metamorphosis” (see sidebar). The children, called nymphs, resemble their parents and live in the same habitat with the same diet. Young Wheel Bug nymphs look like ants with a projected red butt and an aggressive attitude. Only the adults have wings and the 8- to 12-toothed thoracic semicircular crest that resembles a cogwheel.

Wheel Bugs are diurnal (active during the daytime) and fearless, so they are a frequent sight in any garden that is insecticide-free. Their attitude is alert, always on the hunt with a small head and bright beady eyes. Their mouthpart looks like a long red saber slung under their neck back towards the abdomen. They have only one generation/year and overwinter as an egg. You’ll see the first freshly-hatched nymphs in May. They molt five times (five instars); a freshly molted Wheel Bug is soft, bright pink and vulnerable to other predators. It takes approximately three months for them to mature and begin focusing on reproductive activities.

Their saliva contains a toxic paralytic substance that kills within 15 seconds. Both nymphs and adults bite and inject their saliva, which also contains digestive enzymes to quickly dissolve their prey. They then slurp the resulting smoothie, leaving a black empty shell, which is heart-breaking when it’s a Monarch caterpillar. Speaking from experience, if you are bitten the initial pain almost knocks you to the ground; it is far worse than any bee or wasp sting. My hand swelled to the size of a catcher’s mitt and continued red, swollen and very painful for two weeks. Then I endured a week of intense itching. But it was my fault for accidentally grabbing a Wheel Bug while deadheading the Columbines, so I still love them for their curious deliberate movements, looking like the fighting machines in Star Wars. The Internet claims that a Wheel Bug can be tamed as a pet! They quickly learn to accept living insects from their keeper, but that is more risk than even I would take.

So, are these indeed “good guys”? On balance, probably “yes,” so I usually just stand back in admiration when encountering them in my garden. However, I kill any that I find near or on a Milkweed or other butterfly host plant. The adults are powerful fliers so relocation doesn’t work, they will return. Sadly, I’ve experienced one Wheel Bug killing and slurping six Monarch caterpillars in a mere 30 minutes. Since they move slowly and deliberately, a quick snip with my trusty kitchen shears dispatches them. Every gardener should make their own decisions. Mother Nature makes no moral distinctions, but my human value system favors Monarchs over Wheel Bugs.

**Insect Lifestyles**

Most Insects such as Butterflies, Moths, Bees, Beetles and Ants, live their lives in four separate stages. Called “complete metamorphosis,” the stages consist of the egg, larva, pupa and adult. The immature larva resembles a worm. The transformation from a worm-like creature into the winged reproductive adult occurs during the pupal stage, completing the metamorphosis.

“Incomplete Metamorphosis” lacks the pupal stage, so the immature larvae (called nymphs) usually resemble a smaller version of their parents. They grow by molting and lack genitalia and wings until the final molt. Examples of insects using incomplete metamorphosis include Dragonflies, Grasshoppers and Crickets, and the true bugs like Stink Bugs, Squash Bugs and Wheel Bugs.

**Back by Popular Request:** Insects are a part of every gardener’s life. Each month you’ll meet a common insect with advice on whether you should eradicate, tolerate or embrace this six-legged visitor. January’s Wheel Bug was requested by Susan Thompson. February will be the Praying Mantis, requested by Janette Bennett. Please let Lenora know if you have a request!
Gardening by Design
4th Annual Spring Gardening Symposium in Paola

March 2, 2019
9:00 am - 3:30 pm
Check-in: 8:30 am

Town Square Event Center
15 West Wea, Paola, KS 66071
Paola map at www.maraisdescygnes.ksu.edu

Space is limited—
Register by February 18!
This event is open to all, but pre-registration is required by February 18. The $40 registration fee includes a gourmet boxed lunch, snacks, and all printed reference materials.

Name: ______________________________________________________

Email: _______________________________________________________

City/State: ___________________________________________________

Telephone: ______________________________

Make your check payable to the MdC Extension Master Gardeners and mail with this form (or you may access a printable form at www.maraisdescygnes.ksu.edu) with your check for $40 to:
K-State Research and Extension
Marais des Cygnes District–Paola Office
104 S. Brayman, Paola, KS 66071

MdC EMGs receive 5 hours advanced training credit. Other EMGs: ask your County Agent if AT credit is approved. For more information call 913-294-4306.

Bryan Boccard, Keynote Speaker
Kauffman Memorial Garden
The Garden as Performance Art
How to build suspense and drama in a garden, and utilizing the “actors.”

Dennis Patton
Horticultural Agent, JoCo KSU Extension
Finding Mr. Good Shrub
Finding the right shrub for any location, as well as planting, pruning and maintenance.

Timothy Maloney
Professor of Landscape Design, UM–Columbia
The Second Time Around
Analyzing your current landscape, creating a master plan phasing in or out the projects, as well as managing a realistic budget.

Myrna Minnis
Owner, Art with Myrna
The Gargoyle in the Garden
The role of art in a garden. Utilizing purchased and owner-created art, tips for installing art, and a demonstration of an easy project any gardener could create.
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All orders WITH payment are due to the Extension Office by January 31, 2019

Make Checks Payable to: Marais des Cygnes Extension Master Gardeners

Grand Total

Add $3.00 each

Tax is included in the price