What’s Growing On…
The latest news from the Marais des Cygnes Extension Master Gardeners

OCTOBER 2020 | 104 S. Brayman St., Paola, KS 66071 | 913-294-4306 | www.maraisdescygnes.ksu.edu

CALENDAR

October 27 Advanced Training
Judy Sharp presents “Drought Resistant Perennials,” 6:30 pm on Zoom at the Paola Extension Office if people request it (with social distancing and masks), and on Zoom at your home. Katelyn will email link, etc.

Advanced Training Online: See K-State Garden Hour on Facebook

The Gardens:
Courthouse:
Final cleanup was tentatively scheduled for October 21.
Phyllis Benedict 913-294-4751 pabeneditct51@gmail.com

Extension Office:
EMGs rescued plants from the gardens before the Oct. 13 Q3 meeting in anticipation of our move to new space in January.
Sue Burns 816-510-5291 smbohmker@hotmail.com

Trial Garden:
Cleanup will be scheduled about two weeks after the freeze.
Chet McLaughlin, 913-963-7187 mclaughlin1944@gmail.com

Regularly scheduled Board meetings are the second Tuesday of each month, 9:30 am, Paola Ext. Office.

Newsletter deadline is noon on Thursday following the Tuesday Board meeting.

Judy Sharp October 27 on Zoom

Judy Sharp has been nurturing plants in the ground for 37 years with uneven success and taking care of houseplants long before that. Her oldest houseplant, at least 85 years old, is one she inherited from her grandmother.

Having retired from the UMKC School of Law after 40 years in business and tax law practices, Judy is finally able to focus her attention on connecting with plants and nature.

She joined the Johnson County Extension Master Gardeners in 2015 and formally began volunteering in 2016. She loves hostas and daylilies due to their easy care. Water scarcity needs to be in everyone’s mind; therefore every gardener needs to incorporate drought tolerant plants to contribute beauty without wasting our precious resource.

Drought Tolerant Perennials
Uneven rainfalls and longer drought can make gardening more challenging. Anyone can grow a garden with great soils, readily available water, passion and time. Water is becoming more and more precious.

Must we ignore that scarcity just to have a thriving garden? Is there a way to have a beautiful garden while conserving water at the same time? This class will cover those questions and give you some suggestions of methods that have been tried and plants that have thrived in Judy’s own garden.

IMPORTANT NOTES

• Katelyn has sent the link to online voting for three new 2021 Board members. Voting ends Nov. 6.

• The extension office is scheduled to be moved into the new location by January 31, 2021. There will be one space for volunteers that will be shared between the various groups. There will also be a conference room available.

• Tentative plans for the 2021 Awards Banquet are in the works. The 2021 Symposium has been cancelled, but we hope to schedule it again for 2022.

• The 2021 Plant Sale will be held on April 29, 30 and May 1, baring unforeseen circumstances.

• 2021 Garden Tour info is on page 2. Tentative dates are September 10-11. The board voted to change the ticket price to $15 (good for both days). Sponsorship levels will change to $350 for Patrons, $200 for Sponsors, and $100 for Supporters.

Follow the Marais des Cygnes EMGs on Facebook at www.facebook.com/mdcemg
Advisory Board

Chairman — Betsy Hasselquist
Vice Chairman — Phyllis Benedict
Secretary – Anita Boyett-Voke
Treasurer – Laraine Crawford

Members at Large
Sue Burns
Cathy Stainbrook
Judy Moser

Committees

Courthouse Garden
Phyllis Benedict & Kathy Doherty

Trial Garden
Shirley New & Chet McLaughlin

KSU Extension Office Garden
Sue Burns & Debbie Kitchell

Lakemary Liaison
Becky Thorpe

Advanced Training
Laraine Crawford

Awards Banquet
Donna Cook & Susan Thompson

Symposium
Chair(s) Needed

Plant Sale
Sondra Dela Cruz & Lenora Larson

Garden Tour 2021
Jan Thompson & Betsy Hasselquist

Publicity
Judy Moser & Lenora Larson

Seeds for Kids
Kathleen Brady-Francis & Janette Bennett

Social Media
Anita Boyett-Voke

Miami County Fair
Chet McLaughlin & Michael Poss
Pat Trachsel & Sue Burns

Linn County Fair
Mike Brown

New Recruits/Mentors
Jan Thompson & Betsy Hasselquist

Newspaper Articles
Katelyn Barthol, Extension Agent

Send news and photos to:
Judy Moser, Newsletter Editor
judy@springvalleynursery.com

2021 GARDEN TOUR

“A September to Remember” Garden Tour, September 10 and 11, 2021, from 9 to 5. Planning is underway!

We have six fantastic and very diverse gardens lined up (three from our very own EMGs), committed liaisons for support, and vendors for each garden.

We are seeking sponsors to support costs of the tour. Sue Burns, Donna Cook and Stephanie Myers are on the committee to elicit sponsors. Sponsor agreement forms are available now.

Contact Jan Thompson jkg.thompson@gmail.com or Betsy Hasselquist, bjbniangua@yahoo.com, garden tour co-chairs, with any ideas, questions.

Stacie Campbell, Campbell Highlands, Hillsdale, pictured with a giant fig. At right is her amazing waterfall, a solution to drainage problems.

Lois Hart’s Day Lilies, nestled in the woods. There is much to enjoy and learn at this garden, especially from her plant labeling system.
Together We Stand, Divided We...???

By Betsy Hasselquist, MdC EMG Chair

October General Meeting and Plant Digging Party

The MdC EMGs came together October 13 and divided and conquered, so to speak. With the office moving, we needed to transplant hundreds of plants. Move it or lose it, as they say. The turnout was great and EMGs harvested plants to provide them new homes, thus continuing the gardens’ legacy. Hope you’re getting them all planted and praying for rain. The gardens included a huge variety of sun and shade perennials, including columbines, peonies, irises, herbs, butterfly plants, echinacea seeds, blackberry bushes and even elephant ears that thrived several years under the building’s overhang. (Photos on page 5.)

A huge THANK YOU to Sue Burns and Debbie Kitchell and volunteers (you know who you are!) for your countless hours creating and maintaining these gardens. It was bittersweet after all the blood, sweat and tears that went into establishing the variety of beds that were coming to maturity, but... life goes on.

My vegetable garden froze this week, so time to start fall cleanup and to get bulbs and those extension garden plants into the ground.

VOTE. VOTE, VOTE!!! Did I say VOTE?! VOTE for the EMG candidates who devote time and energy into guiding our organization. Katelyn has sent the link for online voting.

VOTE in the November 3rd election!!! Early voting has begun and four drop off boxes for mail in ballots are available in Miami County.

And the Pandemic Goes On

How’s everyone doing? Who knows what will come with the changing seasons when we’re stuck more inside. People are tired of the restrictions, missing activities and wearing masks.

Countless people are dealing with significant losses, death of a loved one, separation from friends and family and financial struggles. Hope you and yours are doing well.

Support our local businesses!

Please make thoughtful decisions for yourself, your loved ones and our community. Let people know you care. Practice compassion and take care of yourself.

Count your blessings, have some fun and remember to breathe.

Enjoy fall and all the beautiful colors!

Be healthy. Be safe. Be kind. ✿

Some gorgeous fall photos from the Facebook page of former MdC EMG Kathy Ayres.
Weary gardeners welcome fall: no more summer heat, no voracious grasshoppers or incessant weeding. However, the traditional fall chores can be daunting: cutting back the perennials, collecting and removing all plant debris, raking and composting fallen leaves, etc., etc. Is all this work necessary?

The current rallying cry of environmentally conscious gardeners is “Leave the Leaves!” as they declare that all of that mess should be left to decompose until spring. The traditional gardeners push back: “Remove that mess to expose the bare earth!” Both sides are correct. We all want yes or no answers to our gardening questions, but in the words of my hero, Dennis Patton, “It depends.” Some fall clean-up is necessary to control pests or prevent smothering of perennial plants. Some “leaving” is necessary to protect plants and beneficial insects. How do you know what is best for your garden? Best is to maintain a part of your yard as “wild”, undisturbed throughout the year with only minor spring tidying.

The rest of your yard is typically divided into three distinct areas that should be treated differently in the fall clean-up strategy.

The Vegetable Garden
A vegetable garden is an artificial array of mostly annual, monoculture plantings that attract multitudes of specific pests. For instance, fungus and bacteria spores survive the winter on dead tomato plants. Asparagus Beetles overwinter in dead asparagus stalks. Cabbage worms overwinter as chrysalids attached to remnants of cabbage or broccoli stems. Squash Bugs and Armyworms/Cutworms overwinter just under the soil surface and prefer the protection of mulch. And have you ever pulled back your mulch in spring and seen a city of rodent tunnels? YIKES! You don’t want these enemies to survive the winter.

Consequently, vegetable gardeners should thoroughly clean up their gardens in the fall. Healthy weed-free plant debris should go to the compost pile. Since there are no perennials that need a winter-protective layer of mulch, remove it to the compost pile. Then a thick layer of compost (or leaf mulch--not hay or straw) can be applied to the “clean” soil surface as a regenerative start for next spring.

The Lawn
Excessive build-up of dead tree leaves on your lawn will kill the grass, so a fall clean-up is necessary. However, discarding or burning dead leaves deprives your garden of the best possible mulch. The clean-up tactics depend on the volume of leaves, determined by the numbers and species of trees. Raking leaves and then running them through a leaf shredder is labor intensive, but effective. However, experts currently recommend mowing the leaves as they fall onto the lawn, leaving the fine leaf particles to slip in-between the grass blades to form mulch, the ultimate “leave the leaves”! The benefits include providing nutrients, conserving water and suppressing weeds.

However, if you have a lawn shaded by many large-leaved trees, it may be difficult to keep up since piled leaves will begin to harm your grass if not removed within three days. Wet piles should be removed immediately. And if you do keep up, the volume of mulched leaves may overwhelm and suffocate the grass. If you have a plenitude of leaves, mow and collect them in your mower’s bag, or mow them into piles for easy gathering. This collected leaf mulch should be used to top off the vegetable and/or flower beds and will eventually decompose to improve your soil’s structure and fertility.

The Ornamental Garden
Your ornamental garden consists of a diverse community of annual and perennial plants and a diverse community of critters. They form an interactive ecosystem that is damaged or destroyed if you “clean” your garden in fall. This (Continued on next page)
Great turn out for the plant digging party!

(Fall cleanup, continued from page 4)

slaughter includes butterflies, bees and fireflies. Additionally, many of your plants also profit from delaying clean-up until spring. The dead stems catch and hold blowing leaves to form a protective blanket that will prevent the freeze/thaw cycle that can damage roots and even heave the plants from the ground. Much of the dead plant material will degrade into mulch over the winter, saving time and effort next spring.

All the wildlife, especially birds, will appreciate the stems and seed heads that provide shelter and food. And you can find beauty in ice and snow bejeweled plants.

A Personal Summary:

I clean my raised vegetable beds by burning all the debris in place each fall, thus preserving the minerals and incinerating the bad bugs. Because I have few trees and no “real” lawns, fallen leaves are easily managed by mowing. All leaves that fall on the flower beds are left in place and leaves that collect on paths are quickly gathered and placed in the flower beds as additional mulch.

During the winter months, I enjoy hand-shredding the dead leaves, stems, twigs and ornamental grass fronds and leaving them in place to form a 3” deep blanket of mulch. The result is a tidy, uniform appearance and a weed-free garden awaiting the return of another glorious spring.

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