

The Green Patch

Youth Participate in Horticulture ID Contests

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As part of the 20th annual Northeast Nebraska Master Gardener Plant Fair May 5, a youth horticulture plant identification contest was held. Area youth were invited to participate in the competition. A total of nine youth participated with five in the junior division, two in the intermediate division, and two in the senior division. Each contestant was asked to identify 50 plants.



Becca Kment of Plainview placed first in the junior division with Sarah Perrigan of Norfolk placing second and Laura Perrigan of Norfolk placing third. In the intermediate division, Katherine Perrigan of Norfolk finished in first place with Stephanie Sorensen of Plainview placing second. For the senior division, Rachel Sorensen of Plainview placed first and Laura Greunke of Winside placed second. Thank you to Mulch N More and Don Liedman for providing additional plants for the contest.

Back row: Laura Greunke, Laura Perrigan, Stephanie Sorensen, Katherine Perrigan, Rachel Sorensen, and Wayne Ohnesorg (Northeast Nebraska Master Gardener Coordinator)
Front row: Elizabeth Kment, Becca Kment, Alison Perrigan, and Sarah Perrigan



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On June 20, a small competition was held for 4-H youth, their parents, and Master Gardeners to test their horticultural identification knowledge at Don and Dorrine Liedman's home. A total of eight youth participated with Pierce, Stanton, and Wayne Counties represented. Taking first place was Grace Heithold of Wayne County. Placing second was Rachel Sorensen and third Stephanie Sorensen, both from Pierce County.



In the Master Gardener division Ardith Svitak of Howells placed first with Teresa Roche of Norfolk coming in a very close second.



Back row: Hannah Heppner, Trenton Cadawallader (Stanton Co.), Stephanie Sorensen, Rachel Sorensen (Pierce Co.), Grace Heithold (Wayne Co.), Alysan Wurdinger (Stanton Co.), & Wayne Ohnesorg, Extension Educator
Front row: Lydia Hilbers & Rachel Thomas (Stanton Co.)

When asked to write an article for a column or newsletter, most people will advise you to write about something you know. As I struggled to find a topic for this newsletter, I realized I knew way more than I want to know about hoeing, at least the physical part of it. So I thought a little research into the fine art of hoeing might be helpful.

When looking at my freshly hoed garden, I'm proud of the work I've accomplished, and then a week later, much to my dismay (and a few other feelings I shouldn't mention), I ask myself did I really spend all that time hoeing, because it sure doesn't look like it. And while we avoid using chemicals as much as possible, when I see all those little green weeds sprouting again, using a good dousing of a lethal weed killer sure seems appealing. But I grab my favorite hoe and start to work again.

I think everyone has their favorite hoe, but there is a multitude of different hoes for most any job. My favorite one is called a rocker hoe and some sources call it an action hoe or pointed push hoe. It has an open D-shape and rocks back and forth when using. It will cut on both the push and pull motion and loosens soil well. I like it because a little bit of force gets small weeds, harder force for the bigger ones, and it will even cut through some tough roots. We have three of them as my husband and myself found ourselves arguing over who was going to use it so we purchased a second one. And then we found a really good price on a third one and purchased that one as well thinking as much as we have to hoe, one of them was sure to break and we'd have the extra.

We live on an acreage and our tools get LOTS of use and all three of our rocker hoes are still working well and are anywhere from 8-10 years old. I would recommend checking out one of these great tools.

I think everyone has the common garden hoe which is an all-purpose tool and now comes in a variety of ergonomic designs. Check carefully when you buy as you get what you pay for and a few extra dollars may save time, work, and your back.

Some of the following may be known by different names but if you're looking for something to match a specific task in your garden this might help you get started.

A Cavex hoe has a curved blade and is good for cutting weeds and roots. There is a Dutch scuffle hoe that is more common in Europe that is used as an edger or a pry bar. The Warren hoe is triangular and works for furrows and close weeding. Another one is the Korean hoe which is touted to slice through soil with little effort. An Onion hoe is for your onion patch and is sharpened on the bottom and both sides. It has a wide blade and can be used for grading. This onion hoe intrigued me as one to try. The Collinear hoe has a small, very sharp replaceable blade, and is touted as making weeding as easy as possible. Maybe I should really be more interested in this one if that is true. You can also find a Grub hoe which can be used to dig trenches and will cut through tree roots or heavy clay soil. A picture of this one looks like you could do some serious digging. And then if you like to make raised beds, the Raised bed hoe has an extra wide blade to help with that endeavor.

I have not seen some of these hoes in stores so you might have to do an on-line search to purchase one that piques your interest. Research your needs well. Cost and the possible ergonomic benefits associated with tools can make your life much easier. And it's a shame if we can't take the time to enjoy our gardens.



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Marge Holland shared this information from the Tucson Community Garden coordinator:

With the hefty production of zucchini going on, I thought I would send the following along to make you feel better about picking another one to take home. My favorite trick is to just shred the raw zucchini and measure it out in portion that you use in a recipe, put it in Ziploc bags and freeze. Pulling out an already portioned bag to make muffins, etc. in November for the holidays is a good feeling. . . . just remember to perhaps drain well due to the water content.

Zucchini has many nutritional qualities. Folate, Potassium and Vitamin A, Vitamin C, Vitamin B6, Iron, Magnesium, Phosphorous, Copper, Manganese, Thiamine, Niacin, Pantothenic acid and Zinc.

A zucchini has more potassium than a banana. Zucchini contain 95 percent water; a small one has about 25 calories. Substitute zucchini for a baked potato and save more than 100 calories.

It is low in calories (only 25 calories per 100 grams of zucchini), saturated fat, cholesterol and sodium, and is a great source of *dietary fiber*. Fiber is particularly important for those people who suffer with food allergies and related gastrointestinal conditions.

According to NutritionData.com, one cup of cooked zucchini has a nutrition content of 10% of the RDA of magnesium, 40% of Vitamin A, and 14% of Vitamin C.

All three are among our top immune-boosting nutrients that we try to emphasize in our diet. Besides, Vitamin C and lutein found in zucchini are very good for eyes.

And don't forget: the darker the zucchini, the greater the nutrients and minerals, so look for those deep green colors. Zucchini can be substituted for many vegetables in your favorite recipes. It works well in soups, salads, sauces and egg dishes. It works especially well in Italian dishes.

For most recipes it is not necessary to peel zucchini. The peel is where you get most of your vitamins. Zucchini is bland in taste and usually takes on the flavor of other ingredients.



2012 Northeast Nebraska Master Gardener Plant Fair



Master Gardener Awards: 10 & 20 year members
Alice Johnson, Wayne Co—10 year, Darlene Bennett, Dakota Co—20 year, Phyllis McCain, Madison Co—20 year, Beverly McClure, Cuming Co—20 year, and Wayne Ohnesorg, NE Nebr MG Coordinator



BYF Panelists: Wayne Ohnesorg, Elizabeth Killinger, Amy Timmerman, and Dennis Ferraro.
The 90+ attendees with the wide variety of questions for the panelists.



Gardening Hints,

My clever sister showed me how she keeps her gladiolas standing nice and straight by using the hooped 'corn-tunnels' (the kind that we like to use for tomato cages). She sets them over the plants (hoop side up) prior to the formation of the blossom stalks and then just guides the tall stalks through the holes and no more lovely glad blossoms falling on the ground. Isn't she smart!

I use my wheel barrel all the time in the gardens. Recently Garden Gate magazine showed a hint sent in by a member who took a window box planter (the long narrow ones) and bolted it to the handles. She stated that the drainage holes lined up just right to attach it to the handle bars. I just slide a planter box between the handles so I can remove it if needed. It holds lots of hand tools, a water bottle (or my coffee mug) gloves etc. and if I need to dump the stuff in the wheel-barrel or wash it, I just slide out the box.

Karen Zierke

Frozen Fruit Cups (served at the Pierce Garden Tour)

- 1 6 oz. frozen lemonade
- 1 6 oz. frozen orange juice
- 1 large pkg. frozen raspberries or strawberries
- 1 4 oz. jar marshino cherries [diced] and a little juice
- 1 large can crushed pineapple and juice
- 3 or more diced bananas

On stove dissolve 1 cup sugar in 2 1/2 cups water. Heat till warm. Add to fruits. Then freeze in cups. Thaw at least 30 minutes before serving.

Vicki Rundell

Old Can Be New Again

By Janelle McIntyre , Platte County Master Gardener

Summer is in full swing and our gardens have done much of their work by now. We may have spotted some plants that are not pulling their weight or even have met their maker. Why not add a plant that can take Nebraska's harsh weather and come thru with a smile--irises. Wait before you start yawning. There are so many new hybrids with colors and types to pick from you could never be bored; anything from the common yellow to the deepest black or from the smallest dwarf to the tallest Siberian.



Let's start with the dwarf iris. Ours bloom before the tulips, around the same time as the crocuses. They are blue, six inches tall and planted in a six foot square around an ash tree in our lane. Many a car has slowed down to see their showy display. In the garden catalogs they come in many colors.

Next to bloom in the late spring is the bearded iris. We have so many. One of my favorites is the Black iris. It really is a dark purple. When its huge blooms open, it takes my breath away. Another favorite was a gift from our daughter. Generous friends and family are a cheap source. If you admire one, let them know. When they renovate they may keep you in mind. Or if you are impatient go to a catalog, find that particular iris and order it. The color selection found within bearded irises boggles the mind.

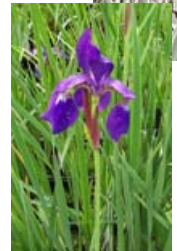
The reblooming irises are a fairly new category. They are supposed to rebloom in the fall. Maybe it's the Nebraska weather but don't count on a second bloom. If they do, it is truly frosting on the cake. Only the white one called "Immortality" reblooms for us, but hope springs eternal and that is what gardening is all about.



An architectural statement in the garden is the striped or variegated leaved iris. The leaves can be striped with creamy white or yellow beige and green. The blooms are usually blue but are not that important. The unique color variation in the leaves is the reason to use them. The eye is drawn to them and they pop from a distance or close up. Clarkson has a wonderful supply.



The Siberia iris is quite tall and blooms a little later than the other irises. It likes moisture. In our climate it may not be a perfect mix. We put ours by a drain spout, it gets more rainfall than any plant we have. It has been very vigorous so far. I think we just lucked out. Maybe you have a better source of water. These make great plants for Rain Gardens which are growing in popularity. The tall grass-like foliage has good vertical lines in the landscape. These too, have a wonderful color range.



Old can be new again. Next month, August, is the best time to plant irises. Give them a try.

Pictures from bluebirdnursery.com

Dahlia

By Vlasta Zrust , Colfax County Master Gardener



I took the best flowers off of this Sparticus Dahlia that I arranged for a friend for a special occasion. She had never seen such a tall dahlia and wanted to take a picture of it.

The pink flower is the Just Married Dahlia.



Do you have an unsightly area or view that you would like screened or made more attractive? Try the lowly hollyhock. It's only been around for centuries and is making a real show in the popularity of cottage gardens. Of course we remember its use out on the farm to camouflage the little necessary house out back. My mother showed me how to make little dolls from the flowers, or we strung them together for necklaces. I guess we thought of it as more utilitarian than enjoying its beauty and tenacity.

This biennial member of the mallow family is also related to the hibiscus. With three basic categories one can find a place for it in most gardens. There is the traditional tall hollyhock growing in some cases to 8 and 9 feet. Also there are doubles which look like carnations, or miniatures which are 2 to 3 feet in height, maybe more versatile for today's gardeners. But beware, they are tenacious. They re-seed readily and come up in the strangest places. They have a long tap root, like the dandelion. You know what happens when you don't get all the root of a dandelion! And the taller varieties may need to be staked in windy sites, like Nebraska!



It is susceptible to the fungus 'hollyhock rust' but with good sanitation practices, full sun and general weeding the problem is greatly reduced. It benefits from compost and fertilizer in the spring and prefers to be watered from below. Hollyhock also likes good drainage, which may be the reason that my little patch died out.

With pastel colors to choose from, even black, this common flower can be a real show case in the garden.

Pictures from gardeningisezee.com

Pierce Garden Tour

By Karen Zierke , Pierce County Master Gardener

We had about 45 people on our Pierce Tour on June 25, weather was just fine, just enough wind to keep us cool and the sky was hazy so that sun lost some of its intensity. There were 17 Master Gardeners and the rest were interested guests!

We saw some great gardens, shared information about some mutual problems like moles, rose slugs, drought and heat etc. It's interesting to see how each of us has our own unique method of landscaping and always the gardens are attractive and give us new ideas to implement in our own yards. We were surprised to find certain perennials blooming in one garden and then in the next, only starting to bud. And how some have lavender that flourishes and others of us struggle to keep it alive!

Thank you to those who so willingly opened their yards and homes to us and to the Master Gardeners who helped provide the lunch. And especially Vicki Rundell, at whose home we all enjoyed sitting down inside for refreshments.

Mike Gleason, owner and operator of the Mayflower Nursery, about two miles west of Pierce provided all attendees with petunias.



Pictures taken by Deb Daehnke

Last night the weather man told everyone to "go out and wash their cars. Anything to bring rain." This is our friendly reminder - it is time to water those new plants! (I am sure as I post this the clouds will start to build.) The untimely rains this year along with heat and wind have been really tough on new plants.

There is no formula for watering. Like any horticultural task there is an art and a science involved. There are many factors that can influence when, how much, and how to water. Plant type, plant age (newly planted or not), soil type, micro-climate, lawn irrigation, type of watering method to be used etc. Below is not an all-inclusive guide, but hopefully can get you started down the right path.

Keys to watering properly:

1. Always check to see if your plants need water. Dig down a few inches and see if the soil is moist. A long screw driver, a survey stake, or cut off piece of rebar with a point works well. If resistance is felt when inserting the screw drive it is time to water. Plants that were in containers and haven't rooted out yet will need more frequent watering because the soil-less mix can dry out quickly.
2. Water in the morning or evening to conserve water. That said, watering when you have time is better than not watering at all.
3. Water DEEPLY. Most people make the mistake of seeing the top of the soil become moist and assuming they have watered enough. In general, a hose (not a sprinkler) running normally for 2 minutes will apply 10 gallons of water. If you are watering 10 seconds per shrub less than a gallon of water is being put on. If you are hand watering stand at each shrub for a minute or two. I tend to water everything and then start over and do it all again. Deep, infrequent waterings are much better for the health and establishment of your plants.
4. If you are using a sprinkler spend 15 minutes at the start of the season to calibrate it to know how long it will need to run to put on 1" of water. For directions, see the publication—[WaterWise Landscaping & Watering Guide](http://www.mwcog.org/environment/water/watersupply/downloads/landscape%20guide.PDF).

<http://www.mwcog.org/environment/water/watersupply/downloads/landscape%20guide.PDF>

5. You can test how deep you have watered by using a soil probe (long screw driver, or rebar) an hour after watering. Push the probe into the soil. It will go through moist soil easily but become difficult to push once it hits dry soil.

6. Soil types do affect watering. If you have a very sandy soil you will have to water more frequently. A clay soil you will have to apply more water but less frequently.

7. Trees are best watered by putting a hose on trickle and leaving it there for several hours. Tree gators or five gallon buckets with holes also work as they slowly release water over a period of time.



Tree gator

8. MULCH, but not too much. 2-3 inches of shredded hardwood mulch conserves moisture, slows evaporation, cools the soil and adds organic matter as the mulch decomposes. A hardwood mulch works best. Don't get mulch happy and bury your plants.



Proper Mulch depth



Improper Mulch depth

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6) **A 'How to Water' Primer**

9. Don't assume that because it is 'Native' or 'Drought-tolerant' it doesn't need to be watered during establishment (first year or two). We see this assumption the most with perennials and grasses. Remember that plants are grown in very light-weight potting soil that does not mimic natural soils. This soil dries out very quickly. In nature, native perennials and grass seedlings extend their roots down deeply before putting on much top growth. When we plant them in the landscape it will take a little while for the roots to extend beyond the potting soil and make their way into the native soils. Finding the balance between not watering enough and over-watering can be tricky. Signs of under watering: leaves wilt and curl; older leaves turn yellow or brown; leaves drop; stems and branches die back.



Newly planted plugs of native grasses and perennials



Same landscape, well cared for, two years later

10. Don't OVER water. Many plants are killed from too much love or ignoring automatic turf irrigation systems. Be especially careful not to over water if these systems are spraying on to trees and landscape irrigation beds. When soil is water logged plant roots are starved of oxygen. Symptoms of over watering look similar to a dry plant. Leaves turn light green or yellow; leaves wilt; young shoots wilt.


11. Use a rain gauge. If you get 1 inch of rain in a week you won't need to water. Adjust watering depending on the amount of rain you get.

12. When indicator plants like gooseneck loostrife, heleopsis, monarda and rubdeckia are wilting it is time to water.

Lawn Irrigation Tips:

- Water deeply and infrequently to encourage deeper-rooting and resiliency
- Water early in the day to avoid loss from wind and evaporation and limit potential fungal problems
- Water efficiently (don't water pavement, make sure any automatic system is working properly, use rain sensor to avoid watering after rain, etc.)
- Allow summer dormancy of cool season grasses. Fescue cannot go dormant so some watering is required to keep it alive.
- Lawns should feel firm when you walk across them. If you lawn is squishy, you may be over watering.

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Articles and information for the October issue of *The Green Patch* are due to Pam Greunke (pgreunke2@unl.edu) by August 31, 2012.

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Master Gardeners are people who love plants, gardening, landscaping, and teaching others.



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What is It?? By Wayne Ohnesorg, Extension Educator

The only person to give an answer and get it correct from the last edition of the *What is it?* column was Teresa Roche. She correctly identified the insect in question as an *Ailanthus* webworm (*Atteva aurea*). This moth's caterpillars feed on *Ailanthus*. Hence its name. They are not considered pests and as you can see from the picture the moth is quite attractive.



What is this insect???

This time instead of a single insect the picture shows multiple insects of the same kind flying around in a garage. I took this picture on May 15, 2012. The insects were interested in the void between wood paneling and studs in the garage. There were a total of 300-400 in the garage. What kind of insect is it? Be as specific as you can.

If you think you know, you can give me a call at (402) 370-4040 or shoot me an email wohnesorg2@unl.edu.

Your challenge is to correctly identify the insect and/or plant. The first person to contact me with the correct answer will be awarded one (1) training hour. Everyone that submits an answer will be entered into an end of the year drawing for a free Extension Circular such as the *Landscape Diagnostic Guide for Problems Affecting Woody Ornamentals*. For every *What is it?* column you provide an answer for, you will receive one entry. This offer is available for both the Platte County and Northeast Nebraska Master Gardener groups.

