

Madison-Monroe-St Clair Unit Under the Canopy

For Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists



April 2016



UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS
EXTENSION

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Congratulations 2016 Master Gardeners

Master Gardener training wrapped up on April 5. Congratulations to the new volunteers who have completed their training!!! There were 14 trainees.

Certified Volunteers

Congratulations to **Master Naturalist, Michael McClymont**, for completing his internship. Way to go!!!

Annual Agreements

Letters and forms were mailed in March. Please complete and return the forms to the Extension Office by April 30.

Plants Needed for Plant Sale

While dividing plants in your garden, please share some with the St. Clair Gardens in Bloom Garden Tour and plant sale on June 4. Funds generated from the plant sale support the Master Gardener and Master Naturalist programs. Don't want to babysit the plants that long? Contact Melissa at 971-9259, and she will give them TLC.

Containers Donations Needed

The Madison County Garden Tour is looking for container donations for the raffle. The container can be from an individual or a project. Funds generated from the raffle support the Master Gardener and Master Naturalist programs. Contact the office if you would like to donate.



Master Naturalist Apparel Available

Master Naturalist apparel is now available for purchase. Items can be shipped directly to your home. Check them out! <https://www.sportsworldfire.com/29-master-naturalist>
Orders will be accepted throughout the year.

Baebler Educational Farm Tour

Come and learn more about a new volunteer project! Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists are invited for a tour on April 15 starting at 9 am of the Baebler 4-H Educational Farm. You can carpool from the Waterloo Extension office. The cars will leave the office at 8:45 am. The Farm is located at 4028 JJ Rd, Waterloo. The Farm offers a variety of educational opportunities for youth and adults. Volunteers have been planting trees this spring. Instillation of a pollinator habitat garden will start soon. RSVP to 939-3434 for the tour.

Village Gardens in Godfrey Fundraiser

The Village Garden in Godfrey will have a booth at the Arbor Day Celebration at Glazebrook Park in Godfrey on Friday, April 29, 2016 from 4-8p.m. Glazebrook Park is located at 1401 Stamper Lane. We will be selling garden plants and other garden items to help support our Demonstration Garden. Please come out and support the project!

Have a great month,
Sarah

What's Going on Out There?

Naturalist Phenology Report for Mid-April– Mid-March, 2016

By: Bill Klunk and Elizabeth Frisbie, Master Naturalists

The two-week window from April 11th through April 25th will be the best time this year for Northern Hemisphere observers to see the planet Mercury in the evening sky. Mercury will be visible low in the West Northwest approximately 30 minutes after sunset. The best evening to see Mercury, if skies are clear, will be April 18th when the planet reaches its greatest elongation, 20° to the east of the Sun.

House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*) are migrating back to our area late in April from their winter homes in the southern United States and Mexico. The similar Winter Wren (*Troglodytes hiemalis*) is a smaller bird and leaves our area heading to the northern United States and Canada for the summer.

Poison hemlock (*Conium maculatum*) is a biennial herbaceous plant in the carrot family (*Apiaceae*). This very poisonous plant with purple-blotched stems starts putting on small white blossoms now and can grow to 8 feet by summer's end. The Poison hemlock is an exotic, invasive, and very dangerous plant and has recently been added to the Illinois Exotic Weed Act's list of plants.

(<http://www.ilga.gov/legislation/ilcs/ilcs3.asp?ActID=1735>)



On April 25th those sky observers awake in the wee hours of the morning will enjoy viewing Saturn to the waning gibbous Moon's lower left. Below the Moon and slightly to the right, Mars will be visible as well. The red planet Mars will be joined by Antares, a red-tinted star, which will be shining right below Mars. Mars' red tint comes from the iron oxide in the dust covering its surface. Antares, a very old and highly evolved star, shines red because its outermost layers have ballooned outward and cooled. In our area, the best time to view Saturn (bright whitish tan) and the faintly red Mars and Antares will be around 2:30 AM.

Young Virginia Opossum (*Didelphis virginiana*) are now developed enough to leave their mother's pouch, although they return there to nurse during this reporting period. Watch for young Opossum to ride around on their mother's back during April and May.



Pecan (*Carya illinoensis*) tree will display their drooping staminate catkins about 4-6" during this period. The short pistillate spikes with 2-10 florets also appear on this monoecious tree but are less noticeable.

Largemouth Bass (*Micropterus salmoides*) male fish start moving to shallower water in search of nesting spots when the average water temperature reaches 60F. Spawning will also occur during this reporting period when the water temperature reaches 65F and a 2-4 year or older fertile female bass is herded to the nest by the male. After spawning, the female will permanently leave the area, and the male will defend the offspring as they develop from eggs (2-4 days) to larvae (5-10 days) to schooling fry.

Starting in May, the Common Whitetail (*Libellula lydia*) dragonfly is frequently seen throughout Illinois. Watch for this member of the *Odonata* Order and *Libellulidae* family of common skimmers near large and small bodies of water, marshes, creeks, and rivers.

Easy to find forbs blooming for this report include: Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*), Shooting star (*Dodecatheon meadia*), Indian strawberry (*Duchesnea indica*), Daisy fleabane (*Erigeron strigosus*), Wild strawberry (*Fragaria virginiana*), and Butterweed (*Packera glabella*).



White-tailed Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) are growing their summer coats now. The summer coat hair is short in length with the guard hair measuring $\frac{3}{4}$ of an inch. The White-tail's summer coat is dense and reflects the sun's energy rather than absorbing it, therefore keeping the animals cooler.

References: Audubon; Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics; IDNR; ILPIN; INHS; Tekiela, S.: Deer, Elk & Moose; U of I Extension

Continuing Education Programs

Four Season Webinars

Both offices will host these sessions at 1:30 pm. Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists receive free black and white handouts. Color handouts are \$5. Register by calling the office one week before the program. Recordings of the presentations will also be posted to YouTube.

- WaterSmart Gardening April 26
- Utilizing Containers and Raised Beds to Grow Vegetables May 10
- Backyard Greenhouse Basics May 24

OR Participate in the webinars from home. Register for the online program at go.illinois.edu/4seasons_webinars

- WaterSmart Gardening April 26 @ 1:30 pm or April 28 @ 6:30 pm
- Utilizing Containers and Raised Beds to Grow Vegetables May 10 @ 1:30 pm or May 12 @ 6:30 pm
- Backyard Greenhouse Basics May 24 @ 1:30 pm or May 26 @ 6:30 pm

Sustainability Projects on LCCC Campus

April 20 from 6 to 8 pm at Lewis and Clark Community College, Godfrey

Scott Moss will discuss campus projects and lead a tour of the Lewis and Clark Community College campus. The tour is sponsored by the Southwestern Illinois WildOnes. Please contact Ann Morey at ram204@att.net with more questions.

For the Love of Honeybees

April 21 at 7 pm at the VFW, Red Bud



Pam and Don Laidley will give us an inside look into the art of beekeeping. The discussion will begin with information on the Queen and her court, and what it takes to maintain a healthy colony. They will also cover products of the hive such as honey, wax and their various uses. Other pollinators such as the mason and orchard bee will be discussed, with helpful suggestions on how everyone can protect our pollinators. A question and answer time will follow. The program is sponsored by the Kaskaskia Valley Audubon Society. The VFW is located at 830 South Main Street, Red Bud.

Migration Bird Hike

April 24, May 1, May 8 from 8-10 am at The Nature Institute

Listen for many migrating songbirds on TNI property. Moderate walking – wear comfortable shoes. You may also want to bring binoculars, camera, journal and water. This event is free and open to the public. For more information, call 466-9930 or email at info@TheNatureInstitute.org.

Unit Master Naturalist Meeting

May 20 at 10 am in the Collinsville Office

Join fellow Master Naturalist for our next meeting. Charlie Pitts will be our guest speaker. He will present “Those Other Pollinators.” We will also hear volunteer project updates. RSVP to Sarah by May 17.

2016 American Hosta Society National Convention

June 15-18 in St. Louis

The event includes tours, seminars, banquets, vendors, and more. Early registration is open through April 30. Registration open through May 30. More details at <http://www.stlouishosta.org/2016Convention/2016Convention.htm>



Check out the Unit Webpage for the most up to date info!!!!

<http://web.extension.illinois.edu/mms>

Welcome to My Jungle

By: Elizabeth Wahle, Extension Educator



Tufted titmouse visiting My Jungle at a suet bottom feed style feeder

Bird feeders, though wonderful for feeding and bringing feathered friends in close, require regular maintenance to maintain the health of visiting birds and visual appeal of the garden. According to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, feeders should be hand cleaned about once every two weeks with soap and boiling water or a diluted bleach solution (no more than 1 part bleach to 9 parts water), and then allowed to dry thoroughly before refilling. This process not only removes unsightly bird droppings and other contaminants that potentially spread infectious bird diseases, but it also serves to remove any moldy or decomposing seeds and hulls that tend to accumulate in cracks and crevices, which can also make birds sick.

Another challenge with bird feeders is everything that drops to the ground. Beyond bird droppings, hulls and grain fillers that birds don't seem to prefer end up on the ground and results in a combination of moldy spoiled food and a weedy mess from uneaten seeds that have germinated. To reduce some of this, purchase no-waste bird food or single-type seeds like sunflowers that are more highly preferred by most seed-eating backyard birds. Not only will you notice less on the ground, but you will notice an increase in visits. Also, rake away seed residue under feeders regularly. By keeping the area clean, you are also providing a healthier environment for ground feeding birds to come in and clean up any seeds that do make it to the ground.

Plant acquisition for the Jungle has begun in earnest. One nursery surprisingly shipped the first week of February, necessitating the purchase of a rolling covered plant stand to store and protect plants until a more suitable planting time. Once anchored with a cement block, this easy to assemble/disassemble and quite reasonably priced (\$39.99) greenhouse has been quite useful.



2.25-ft L x 1.58-ft W x 5.33-ft H Metal Greenhouse

One plant being trialed this year in the Jungle is *Edgeworthia chrysantha* 'Snow Cream'- Oriental Paperbush. Given a specimen is growing outside quite nicely at the Missouri Botanical Garden (Bulb Gardens), it seemed a safer risk to acquire and not kill such a gorgeous shrub even though most sources site USDA 7b as its bottom end of hardiness. *Edgeworthia* is a member of the Daphne Family (Thymelaeaceae) and its bark fibers are traditionally used for making handmade Japanese tissue and paper. In addition, fragrant, golden yellow flowers are borne in pendulous clusters on branch tips from mid-February to early-April. At the end of bloom, dark green lanceolate leaves (3-5") begin emerging to add an uncommon texture to the garden design.



Edgeworthia chrysantha 'Snow Cream' - Snow Cream Paper Plant

As mentioned last year, this is the time to order fall-planted bulbs before you physically and mentally get too worn out from spring planting. When they come in the fall, you'll groan at the work still ahead of you, but you'll be singing your own praises the following spring.

Elizabeth Wahle's Open Garden Event

Tour Elizabeth's "jungle" on May 18 from 5-7:30 pm. Check out her new raised beds, iris collection, and much more! Spouses/guests are also welcome. Bring a lawn chair. Refreshments will be available. RSVP to Sarah by May 16. Please consider carpooling to reduce traffic congestion. *Rain Date scheduled for May 19.*

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