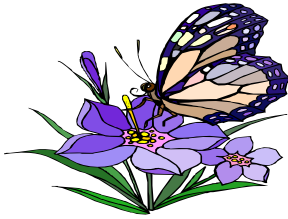


WHAT'S COMING UP?

Volume 4

April, 2009

The Newsletter of the Polk County MG Association



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PCMGA April 20, 2009 Meeting Minutes

The April meeting of the Polk County Master Gardeners Association was held at the Polk County Justice Center in Balsam Lake. The meeting was started at 6:30PM due to having a guest speaker, Diane Patras. The regular portion of the meeting was called to order at 7:30PM by Fritz Coulter, President.

TREASURERS REPORT:

Jim West gave treasurers report that we have a balance of \$996.00. Fritz paid for shipping & handling on the 800 tubes he ordered for Mason Bee nester boxes and Jim has \$18.00 into end caps, large caps for the nesting boxes. 8 gardening journals were ordered and paid for by the new Master Gardeners class.

OLD BUSINESS

Sportsman Show-April 25th & 26th has been scheduled. A roster of gardeners volunteering to work the booth was sent around for 2nd time. Set up is Friday, April 24th at 6:00PM and tear down is Sunday at 4:00PM. Julie has done a display for "SHARE THE BOUNTY", a photo display, marigold kits for the kids. She will provide candy to hand out or to entice people to stop by. A display for selling Mason Bee Nestors for \$10.00 complete w/hook for hanging will be sold. Hanging baskets of pansies will be on display and we will also have a display of past gardens and projects we have worked on.

Wanderoos Plant Sale:

Mothers Day-Sunday, May 10th from 8-11 or 12:00 depending on weather. All plants for sale will be set up on trailers provided by Jim West. All plants need to be in presentable pots and not just put in boxes. Please have them marked as to what variety they are and we will mark for price. Stu Kuehl, made a planter that we will have a drawing for at the plant sale. If you can't work please have your plants to Jim West by Friday evening or Saturday morning.

Polk County Fair

July 29th-August 2nd. Setup of the booth will be Wednesday, July 28th at 6:00. We need to have our display ready to go by 8:00 AM on Thursday morning. We also will not be allowed to get into the fair for free so we need to have entered an item to the fair. Judging will also be completed by Wednesday, July 28th. Our spot is \$20 for 80 ft and an additional \$25.00 for electricity to run fans.

NEW INFORMATION: We **need someone to coordinate the fair** as far as getting workers lined up for manning the booth. They will also be responsible for making sure money is sent in on time and we are ready to go. Fritz has done this for past 2 yrs-he will not do so this year so someone needs to volunteer by next meeting or we will not take part in the fair. Fair deadline is for information to be mailed in & received no later than July 1st.

Fritz taught classes at the Clear Lake Library on asparagus. Fantastic article on asparagus available from the University of Utah extension website. Also gave information on small fruits such as raspberries & blueberries.

Soil samples on a special 2 for 1 testing for \$15 will be taken by Ryan Sterry for Master Gardeners only if brought into the Polk County extension office by Friday, April 24th. He will be leaving early Monday, April 27th. This is the only time this will be provided, after that packets can be acquired from Ryan's office and mailed directly to Madison by the gardener.

NEW BUSINESS

Educational opportunities:

Plant Health Advisors On-Line Advanced Training for Master Gardeners. Volunteers and University of Wisconsin extension staff will answer horticulture questions completely on line. Covers fundamental steps of plant diagnosis and essential information on plant ID, Plant pathology & entomology by health advisors. Questions contact Barbara.Larsen@ces.uxex.edu

Online Registration & Fee \$25-payable to:

Kenosha Count UW Extension

19600 75th Street

PO Box 550

Bristol, WI 53104

262-857-1945

Wisconsin Master Gardeners Convention-October 2 & 3rd, 2009 at Ho-Chunk Convention Center between Baraboo & WI Dells. Columbia, Sauk, Marquette, Adams & Juneau counties will be taking part in this years activities. will be held in November but nominations will take place at next meeting in October. \$1 donation will be asked for by each master gardener or a \$50 gift equivalent. Donations need to be received by September 15th to Phyllis Booth, Sauk U of W Extension Office 505 Broadway Baraboo, WI 53913.

EDUCATION

Diane Patras presented a class & slide show on GROWING SWEET POTATOES- She has been a master gardener for 9 yrs & her husband David Smith has been a Master Gardener for 2 yrs. Diane plants Georgia Jet variety but will be trying new ones this year. Sweet Potatoes are sent as slips and all slips are sent from a location in Georgia. Slips are purchased through different garden suppliers but mailed directly from Georgia. Once received put your slips in water for a few hrs or no longer than overnight. Plant into 12 “ mounds and make indentation. Water every day for 7 days and they should take off after that. No further watering is necessary and seem to be very drought tolerant. If potatoes get too wet they will rot.

New slips can be started for the next year from potatoes of your own from this years harvest. If you grow your own start them about 6-8 wks before wanting to plant outside. Take a tray with 4” moist soil less mix. Place whole sweet potato in soil with less than 1 inch covering. Cover with plastic wrap. Needs bottom heat at 75-80 degrees. Remove plastic when plant emerges & put under lights for 12-14 hrs a day, keep bottom heat & check daily and water as needed. Usually takes at least 3 weeks to sprout. Cut slips to about 9-12” and put most of it into the ground. You should be able to use your variety 2-3 yrs before getting new slips from a supplier to prevent diseases.

Sweet potatoes do not have any fertilizer recommendations but Diane mixes in a small amount when planting. Space your slips w/ all leaves removed from portion being put into the ground and 12-18” apart and place 6” under soil leaving 2 leaves above ground. Eventually the plant will grow a vine that will cover the hill and weeds should not be an issue but carefully rake out any weeds that appear. You can use landscape fabric on your hill if you want but Diane didn’t see any advantage to using it and the fabric gets pretty hot so vines wither when touch fabric. Will recover but again not necessary.

Sweet potatoes also do not seem to attract any potato beetles either. Planting is recommended for June 1st and not before. Most sweet potatoes for Northern gardens should reach harvest in 85-95 days.

Ken Kepper from Kepper Farms seems to purchase his from a Canada supplier so you can go on-line and find them and put your order in.

Once potatoes are harvested place them on newspaper and let them air dry for two weeks at 75-80 degrees. The dirt can dry off naturally as any banging together will cause bruising on your potatoes and ruin them. Diane winters them over in a moist 50 degrees in her furnace room. Should be able to keep from September/October through the spring.

NOTE: Bergmann’s Nursery in Clayton will be getting sweet potato slips in sometime early in May.

Next meeting Monday, May 18th at the Polk County Justice Center at 6:45PM.
Presentation will be by Mike Bauer on Shitake mushrooms.



EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

See notes in Minutes of April meeting.



THERE IS STILL PLENTY OF ROOM FOR ADDITIONAL HELP ON COMMITTEES. THIS GROUP IS ONLY AS GOOD AS ITS VOLUNTEERS. WE WILL BE LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS TO HELP WITH CLASS IF THERE IS ENOUGH INTEREST.

Club Volunteer Opportunities.

If you are looking for volunteer opportunities think about hitting one of the project gardens we have done and do a little weeding. If you don't know where they are, send a quick email and we will let you know. A couple to remember: Golden Age Manor in Amery, the Polk County Fair Grounds, the Polk County Government Center and Garfield Park on Lake Wapo and Good Sam Nursing Home in St. Croix.

NEED SOMEONE TO HEAD UP TO BOOTH AT POLK COUNTY FAIR. This would involve lining up and coordinating workers and sending in registration.