Plan To Garden With Children
by Donna Aufdenberg

Take one energy-filled youngster. Provide them with a cup of seed and a shovel. Infuse with a bunch of dirt and sprinkle on a bit of fresh air and sunshine. Yield: One happy child and the start of a summer full of fun called the FAMILY’S GARDEN!

I had the pleasure of letting my two daughters (3 year old twins) help me with the garden area this last week (somewhat chaotic!) and it made me think of those days when I spent my summers helping in the garden. I have very fond memories of gardening with my parents. Each spring I got to pick a vegetable that I wanted to help with and with each year I helped more and more. It really influenced who I became.

I see all the time where children’s enthusiasm for gardening can be nurtured and can grow with just a little work plus some planning and preparation (the challenge with my two girls is the water hose—I don’t like to be watered). Children love to play in the soil and water. Throw in a little seed here and there you would be surprised about how fast things really take off. Younger children really enjoy helping and as they get older, they desire more individual garden projects. From preparing the soil, selecting the plants, planting seeds or transplants, watching them grow to finally harvesting the “crops”, gardening can be great family entertainment regardless whether it’s vegetables or flowers.

When gardening with children, it is wise to intensively care for a small space rather than overwhelming both you and the child with the weeds that will grow in the big areas. Choose a spot that you know things will grow. If you don’t know about your soil, have it tested. Raised beds work well for children to garden out of and easier to manage. When picking the spot, make sure it receives at least 6 hours of sunlight a day. Sunlight is necessary for all crops and flowers. Don’t forget to place the garden site near a water source. Extra water is necessary during the growing season.

When choosing vegetable to grow, consider picking colorful varieties or miniature varieties that may be more reachable and understandable to small children. It might even help to give

(Continued on page 4)
Care of Warm Season Lawn Grass  
by Sarah Denkler

During this time of year your Bermuda and Zoysia grass has come out of dormancy and beginning to green up. It is after this greening that fertilizer can be applied at 1 pound nitrogen (N) per 1000 square feet. This can be continued every 6-8 weeks to keep a lush, green and dense lawn. Large brown patch is a disease of zoysia lawns in wet or shaded areas where drainage is poor. Watch for this in spring or fall when weather is cool. Thatch may provide a hiding place for this disease. Using post-emergent herbicides after the lawn is in full growth will control knotweed, spurge, grasses and sedges. Once the lawn has completely greened up de-thatching or aeration can be done. Maintaining dense, healthy growth will work to smother weeds so herbicides are only necessary if a weed problem was apparent last season. Both Zoysia and Bermuda grass should be mowed at a height of 1.5 to 2 inches through the growing season at least once every 7 days. Fall is the time to focus on proper preparation for winter dormancy. Dormancy is initiated at temps below 50° F. In September (4 to 6 weeks before first expected frost) apply ½ pound of nitrogen per thousand square feet using a low nitrogen, high potassium fertilizer such as 5-5-10. Potassium will help to support the root zone and produce a stronger plant with more rigid cells. At this time mowing heights should be raised ½ inch. The combination of nitrogen and vertical mowing or aeration in fall contributes to increased susceptibility to cold-weather injury. This is the biggest problem with Bermuda grass in our area. Don’t make the mistake of verti-cutting in the fall. It will promote new growth of stolons and rhizomes creating fresh tissue that is susceptible to cold injury. This practice should be saved for spring and summer. Winter will provide the opportunity to use glyphosate herbicides for non-selective control of all green plants. Make sure your warm season grass is completely dormant before using these products. If there is any green tissue on the grass, it will be injured. As winter comes to a close the maintenance cycle comes full circle. In February, you can put down a broadleaf weed control for weeds that will come up in spring (crabgrass, goose grass and foxtail). This should be done before the blooming of forsythia bushes. Do not fertilize at this time as the grass is not actively growing yet. Source: Fresenburg, Brad and Travis Teuton., Managing Lawns and Turfgrass MU Guide MG10.

Pest of the Month: Boxelder Bug  
by Katie Kammler

Boxelder bugs are common this time of year as they come out of their overwintering sites. They can be a nuisance. They hide in cracks and crevices around houses and come out in large quantities on warm days. Fortunately, they produce no odor nor do they cause any damage to anything in a house. They prefer specific plants including their namesake, boxelder and members of the maple family. They generally cause slight damage to their host plant, including distorted leaves or damaged seed. Non-chemical control measures are eliminating the host trees and sealing cracks and crevices around buildings where they overwinter. If chemical control measures are needed, carbaryl, pyrethroids, and neem oil are readily available.
Outdoor flowering plants and Ornamentals
- Pinch azaleas and rhododendron blossoms as they fade. Fertilize them after they bloom and use a fertilizer that will acidify the soil.
- Do not remove spring bulb foliage prematurely or next year’s flower production will decline.
- Pinch back mums to promote bushy growth.
- Some common ground covers suitable for sunny locations include Ajuga, creeping phlox, and creeping juniper.
- Lightly side-dress perennials, including spring bulbs, with a 5-10-10 or 10-10-10 fertilizer, being careful to avoid the center or crown of the plant.
- If you love to garden, but don’t have a lot of time, choose plants that are easy to maintain. Plants that do not need “deadheading” include begonia, impatiens, coleus, alyssum, ageratum, lobelia, vinca and salvia.

Vegetable Gardening
- Growing lettuce under screening materials will slow bolting and extend harvests into hot weather.
- Place cutworm collars around young transplants. Collars are easily made from cardboard strips.
- Set tomatoes in warm soils. Place support stakes or cages at planting time.
- Control caterpillars on broccoli and cabbage plants by handpicking or use biological sprays such as B.T.
- Place a stake by seeds of squash and cucumbers when planting in hills to locate the root zone watering site after the vines have run.
- Watch for striped and spotted cucumber beetles now. Both may spread wilt and mosaic diseases to squash and cucumber plants.
- Plant sweet corn and beans every two weeks through June for an extended harvest.
- Inspect cauliflower every few days. Cut off the curd when the flower sections begin to separate.

Fruits and Nuts
- Prune unwanted shoot as they appear on fruit trees.
- Follow fruit tree spray guide by the University of Missouri Extension.

Miscellaneous
- Herbs planted in average soils need no extra fertilizer. Too much may reduce flavor and pungency at harvest.
- Four to five layers of newspaper will serve as an effective mulch in the garden. Cover it with sawdust or straw to reduce the white glare and prevent it from blowing away.

The Bargain Plant: Is it worth it?
Most gardeners like to hit the sales rack when they go to their favorite garden center. Here’s how to ensure that the bargain plants you’re considering will be a good buy.

Avoid plants that are off color, yellow or wilted.

Make sure the plant is labeled especially if you don’t know about the culture or characteristics of the plant.

Examine the plants for insect or disease problems. Don’t forget to check under the leaves.

Don’t buy a sick plant and expect to nurse it back to health. It doesn’t always work.

Check out the roots. If they are white, it’s a keeper. If they are brown or black, put it back!
The Garden Spade

Plan To Garden With Children

by Donna Aufdenberg

(Continued from page 1) the garden a theme like a pizza garden, a salsa garden, or a herb garden. For example, a pizza garden would have everything in it that you would use on a pizza such as green peppers, tomatoes, onions, basil, parsley, and oregano. You might even plant a combination of flowers and vegetables to make it more colorful. Choose child size items. Pick large seeds that are easy for children to handle. Obtain some child size tools that are smaller in size that are easy for them to work with in the garden.

Choose varieties that germinate faster than others. For example, choose lettuce and sunflowers. Purchase some transplants as well as planting seed. Choose vegetables and flowers that tend not to get as many insect and disease problems.

When gardening with children, the options are endless. A garden is a natural place for children to explore nature, learn where food comes from, and develop an appreciation for the environment. It is a good way to bring science, math, nutrition education and teamwork to the backyard and in the family home. It is a fun way to connect with your children so relax and enjoy this upcoming gardening season.

Children’s Theme Gardens

✿ Salsa Garden—Tomato, Jalapeno Pepper (mild), Cilantro, Garlic and Onion

✿ Spaghetti Garden—Tomato, Oregano, Basil, Green Pepper, Garlic and Onion

✿ Alphabet Garden—Flowers and Vegetables that correspond with the letters of the alphabet

✿ Butterfly Garden—Marigolds, Zinnias, Daisies, Parsley and Dill

Cedar Apple Rust

by Katie Kammler

The cedars were decorated beautifully this weekend with cedar apple rust galls. I wondered how long it would be until I received calls about it and I didn’t have to wait long, they started yesterday. The galls on cedar produce a “bloom” of gelatinous bright orange tendrils that release millions of fungal spores. Cedar apple rust does not damage cedar but is harmful to its alternate host, non-resistant apples and flowering crabapples. It can cause premature defoliation and fruit distortion.

The disease can be controlled by planting resistant varieties of apple or resistant varieties of juniper in a landscape situation. Unfortunately in this area we have lots of cedar to host the disease cycle. Fungicides can be applied to apple and crabapple to prevent infection. This also breaks up the disease cycle and reduces the infection in the cedar. The woody galls can be cut off the cedar tree and the galls can also be sprayed with a fungicide to help reduce the disease occurrence.

From Left to Right: Rust on Apple Leaves; Rust on Red Cedar
There are many problems that can arise when growing melons. Aphids, cucumber beetle, mites and thrips are almost always present. They can feed on the vines and in some cases spread disease. If nematode are present in the soil then your melons will be fighting for life from day one.

Disease pressure seems to hit melons the hardest. Most controls for disease are applied when rain is plentiful and weather is cool. There is a disease that seems to wait until we drop our guard a bit and the weather warms up. Downy mildew seems to attack cantaloupe, pumpkins, squash and cucumber hardest but can also be found on watermelon.

Downy mildew, Pseudoperonospora cubensis, attacks quickly using wind as a means of mobility. The disease begins to show itself in summer and continues with increasing pressure through fall in our area. If you see the signs then you have waited too long to prevent this problem and can only hope to keep it from spreading before you are ready to harvest.

The disease only needs a few days to take a crop. What you will notice first is yellow patches on your leaves. On the underside of the leaves you may see fuzzy areas that correspond to the yellow patches. These are the spores that are spread by wind to infect new plants. In a few days the yellow patches will turn brown and following that the leaves will die.

A good method of prevention is using resistant varieties. These are readily available for cucumbers and include the following:

- Pickling – Calypso, Carolina, Conquest, Eureka and Lucky Strike
- Slicers - Dasher II, Daytona and Fanfare
- Burpless Slicers - Green Dragon, Sweet Slice and Orient Express

The following website uses crop reports to forecast areas for possible infection.  
http://cdm.ipmpipe.org/ You can monitor this site to see when your area is likely to be hit by downy mildew and prepare accordingly.


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Repurpose, Reuse, Recycle - Pass It On
By Barb Gray

Onion bags made of net can be filled with pet hair, dry grass, colorful pieces of yarn and small shiny pieces of paper such as gum wrappers or pieces of Mylar. Hang these bags out where the birds can easily reach them. They will use these materials to build their nest.
Master Gardeners and friends and family are cordially invited to a Toast to the Past and the Future at the Oliver House Sunday, May 2 from 2 to 4 p.m. Tour one of Missouri's most prestigious historic homes and meet the people who maintain it. Your $10 ticket includes a tour, light hors d'oeuvres, and wine tasting, with proceeds to be used for the restoration project currently underway. The Oliver House is located at 224 East Adams St. in Jackson. Please RSVP to Ronnie Maxwell at 243-9300.

WORK DAY! Saturday, May 1 at the Oliver House beginning at 9:00 a.m. Please bring your tools and help put the finishing touches on the gardens:) Thank you!

WORK DAY! Since we kind of got rained out this past Saturday, we are going to have another work evening at the Rock Garden in the Jackson City Park next Tuesday, May 4, 2010 starting around 3:30. We're spreading mulch so buckets, rakes, shovels and gloves would be good. Hope to see you there!

MASTER GARDENER TRAINING in SIKESTON on Monday's from June 7 – August 16 from 3:00 pm to 6:00 pm at Mueller's Garden Lane in Sikeston, MO. For more information, contact the Butler County Extension Center - 222 North Broadway, Poplar Bluff, MO 63901 or call (573) 686-8064. Check out the Website http://extension.missouri.edu/butler/Master%20Gardener/2010%20MG%20Sikeston.htm

2010 STE. GENEVIEVE GARDEN WALK -- Mark your calendars now for May 15 & 16, 2010. New this year is a Bird Feeder Contest to complement the Bird House Contest. Check out the website http://extension.missouri.edu/stegenevieve/Schedule%20of%20Events%20at%202010%20Garden%20Walk.pdf

If you would like to continue to receive a hardcopy of the Garden Spade Newsletter, please fill out the form and enclose $10.00 for your annual subscription. The $10.00 covers printing and mailing costs associated with the newsletter.

Mail Payment to:
University of Missouri Extension
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P.O. Box 19
Marble Hill, MO 63764
Contact your local Extension Center if you have questions about any event on the calendar or if you have a horticultural event for the calendar.

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**Upcoming Events….**

**JUNE**

1 - Poplar Bluff Master Gardeners meet on the first Tuesday each month at 6:30PM  
1 - Master Gardener Training at Mineral Area College in Park Hills at 6PM  
7 - Parkland Master Gardeners meet on the first Monday each month at 6:30pm at the Farmington Courthouse Annex (Third Floor)  
7 - Master Gardener Training 3-6PM at Mueller’s Garden Lane in Sikeston  
8 - Master Gardener Training through July 6 at Ste. Genevieve Ext. Office 6PM  
14 - Master Gardener Training 3-6PM at Mueller’s Garden Lane in Sikeston  
15 - Master Gardener Training through July 6 at Ste. Genevieve Ext. Office 6PM  
17 - Cape Girardeau County Master Gardener Meeting is held every Third Thursday of each month at the Cape County Extension Center at 7PM  
21 - Ste. Genevieve Master Gardener Meeting is held every Third Monday of each month at the Ste. Genevieve County Extension Center at 6:30PM  
21 - Master Gardener Training 3-6PM at Mueller’s Garden Lane in Sikeston  
22 - Master Gardener Training through July 6 at Ste. Genevieve Ext. Office 6PM  
28 - Perry County Master Gardener Meeting is held every Fourth Monday of each month at the Perry County Extension Center at 6:30PM

28 - Master Gardener Training 3-6PM at Mueller’s Garden Lane in Sikeston  
29 - Master Gardener Training through July 6 at Ste. Genevieve Ext. Office 6PM

**JULY**

5 - Parkland Master Gardeners meet on the first Monday each month at 6:30PM at the Farmington Courthouse Annex (Third Floor)  
6 - Poplar Bluff Master Gardeners meet on the first Tuesday each month at 6:30PM  
6 - Master Gardener Training through July 6 at Ste. Genevieve Ext. Office 6PM  
12 - Master Gardener Training 3-6PM at Mueller’s Garden Lane in Sikeston  
15 - Cape Girardeau County Master Gardener Meeting is held every Third Thursday of each month at the Cape County Extension Center at 7PM  
19 - Master Gardener Training 3-6PM at Mueller’s Garden Lane in Sikeston  
19 - Ste. Genevieve Master Gardener Meeting is held every Third Monday of each month at the Ste. Genevieve County Extension Center at 6:30PM  
26 - Master Gardener Training 3-6PM at Mueller’s Garden Lane in Sikeston  
26 - Perry County Master Gardener Meeting is held every Fourth Monday of each month at the Perry County Extension Center at 6:30PM
Editor’s Corner

The Monthly Spade is published monthly by University of Missouri Extension staff for individuals and families living in Southeast and East Central Missouri. This newsletter is provided by your local extension council.

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We welcome and encourage Master Gardener groups and individuals to submit items to the newsletter. We encourage the submission of any news such as upcoming volunteer opportunities, community events related to gardening, warm wishes or congratulations to fellow gardeners. We also encourage Master Gardeners sharing experiences and writing articles on timely topics.

All entries into the group news sections must be received by 4:30 on the 15th of each month for the following months news.

Email News to: kammlerk@missouri.edu, denklers@missouri.edu, or aufdenbergd@missouri.edu

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