



Cucurbits: Plants in the gourd family such as cucumbers, squash, pumpkins or melons



Hours of operation:
Dawn to dusk

Location:
The Center is located
on Raab Road in Normal
between Heartland and Lincoln Colleges.

The ISU Horticulture Center is part of the Department of Agriculture.

For more information about the Center contact Jessica Chambers at 309-438-3496 or e-mail at horticulture@ilstu.edu



Prairie Grove

The Center added thirty-seven trees to its grounds in 2008. Twenty-nine of those trees were added to the north side of the prairie in collaboration with the Children and Elder Forest. Joe Grabill, the director of the CEF, approached me about the idea a couple of years ago at the Sustainability Fair at IWU.

The Children and Elder Forest is a local organization that seeks to deepen the bonds between the generations while at the same time planting more indigenous trees in groves, thereby increasing the quality of life in Normal-Bloomington. For the Center there were many advantages to such collaboration.

First, as the Center was only in its third year and was used as farm land, previously it had no significant planting of trees on its twelve acres. Second, the Center's philosophy of planting native and sustainable plants follows the Children & Elders Forest mandate of planting native trees. Planting native trees makes for harder pest resistant trees that ensure longevity for our local indigenous populations.

Third, the Center seeks to have collaborations within the community. This collaboration is ideal because it transcends all age groups;

thereby, further increasing awareness of the Center. Finally, the collaboration, which is a fundraiser, increases the Center's advancement while assuaging its limited budget.



Carol and Roy sponsor a Swamp White Oak.

The Center's conceptual plan has many trees planned throughout its grounds, including a small stand north of

the prairie. During the past three years the Center has focused on reestablishing the prairie and has planted many native forbs and grasses. The prairie will also be the focus for the upcoming Literary Garden. Therefore, establishing the Center's grove as part of this area, seemed like a perfect marriage.

In the fall of 2008, twenty-seven families sponsored and planted their trees. When you come out and visit the Center and you see the trees, remember that each tree has its own story. Each story tells of a parent's love, a special commitment and a true regard for the environment. All these stories enhance the Center's charm and collectively add to its most recent addition, Prairie Grove.

JC



Mike and volunteers planting an alder.



Happy 3rd Birthday Horticulture Center!

Birthdays are meant to be celebrated. They give us a reason to pause and to be thankful for who we are, for all that we have been given and all that we have yet to become. On October 4th the Center celebrated its 3rd birthday. Not its official birthday but what I like to think of as its birthday.

It was a perfect fall day, lots of sunshine and blue sky. It was not too hot nor was it too cold. There was a big white tent. People of all ages came with expectations of fall fun. No traditional birthday cake, but there were caramel apples, popcorn and cookies. No clowns, but there were scarecrows parading their fall garb. No balloons, but there were lots of round pumpkins, gourds and squash.

As the attendees left that day they all took home a gift. There were people who learned something new about cucurbits. Others enjoyed the gardens and the fresh air. Some had the opportunity to spend time with their love ones. And some of us enjoyed the comradery of carrying out an event like the festival. And in turn, with each passing birthday all of these experiences become gifts for the Center, helping to make it into a very special place here in our community.



Scarecrows on Parade

When you think of a parade, thoughts of elaborately decorated floats, marching bands, candy being thrown through the air to children excited with anticipation, and costume laden marchers may be conjured up in your mind. However, at the Autumnal Festival this past fall, a parade of different sorts took place.

For the second year, Scarecrows on Parade added even more success to the Autumnal Festival. Scarecrows on Parade is a “parade” of home-made scarecrows placed throughout the Horticulture Center site during the Autumnal Festival. Scarecrows are donated by many local businesses, university departments and groups, as well as individual families. These “scary” creations are then bid upon before they march home with the highest bidder.

The years most coveted scarecrow, “Planting the Seeds of the Future”, was put together by Libby Barna and Connor Walters, representing the ISU Department of Family and Consumer Sciences. The scarecrow, or scarecrows, was a grandfather kneeling with his granddaughter, and you can just picture him passing along his gardening knowledge to the next generation.

New for this year, festival attendees also had the opportunity to vote for their favorite scarecrow. Once the ballots were counted, the winner was a tiny scarecrow named “Princess Autumn.” Created by the Carley family, “Princess Autumn” was dressed as a smiling, autumnal princess, so it was easy to see why she garnered so many votes.

In only its second year, Scarecrows on Parade raised approximately \$450. Deemed a huge success by Horticulture Center staff, volunteers and festival attendees, this is one parade that will definitely be marching on.

JR



jon's tid bits

"I find the great thing in this world is not so much where we stand, as in what direction we are moving."

Oliver Wendell Holmes

Prairie Grove is a historic name—given by settlers to the scattered woodlands found throughout central Illinois.

While planning your garden for next year, consider using annual vines such as Cardinal Climber (*Ipomoea quamoclit*) or Black-Eyed Susan Vine (*Thunbergia alata*). These provide quick, full cover and summer-long color without needing long-term maintenance like most perennial climbers. These annual vines could be seen last summer and fall throughout the Children's Garden.

Despite the massive diversity found among cucurbits—over 300 varieties of these unusual pumpkins, gourds, and squashes are grown by The Great Pumpkin Patch in Arthur, IL alone—most of these domesticated forms are simply varieties of four major species.

If the US Department of Energy's *20% Wind Energy by 2030 Report* is enacted, that year CO₂ emission will be reduced by the equivalent of 140 million drivers permanently taking their cars off the road. That is 50 times the population of Chicago. Currently, the reduction is equivalent to only 5 million cars—or 1.75 times Chicago's population. There is much work to be done (American Wind Energy Association).

JD



Wind Turbine & Solar Array



If you were driving on Raab Road in late November you might have noticed that the Center had a new addition, courtesy of the hard working folks from the new Renewable Energy major. A 97' wind turbine and a pergola with solar array panels were added to the east portion of the Center.

For the Renewable Energy program, the systems were purchased with two specific grants from the Department of Energy and the Illinois Clean Energy Foundation. The systems will help students to understand the specifics of wind and solar energy, as well as use the data collected to calculate and project real world data. Together the systems provide enough energy to run half a small household.

There were many considerations regarding the location of the arrays and tower. One of the most important, in terms of aesthetics, was incorporating the systems into the landscape in a safe and visually pleasing manner. The arrays are located on a pergola that will have vines climbing up it, while the tower's guide wires will have landscape plantings or fencing to provide protec-

tion to visitors as well as the tower itself. The new system will be the focus for the Center's featured garden in 2009.

The turbine and solar arrays offer several benefits to the Center. The most obvious advantage, the educational component, serves the Center's mission not only for ISU Students but for the community at large. The second advantage is that we have electricity! Without the need of a generator, we can operate electric tools, make ice cream for the 4th of July celebration, make popcorn at the Autumnal Festival and put up Christmas lights during the holidays. Lastly, as the turbine stands proudly over the Center and blows in the wind, it is a beacon for the direction that the Center has taken and will continue to take with our environment.

JC



Congratulations Pumpkin Guy!

On February 19, Founder's Day, one of our very own Horticulture Center Friends, Mac Condill, received the Young Alumni Recipient Award. Mac, an '99 agriculture alumnus, has played and continues to play a very special role at the Center. If you do not know Mac – you should. He is an idea man like many, but like few he also carries those ideas out. He is a passionate man. Everything cucurbit is enthralling to him and that in turn makes you want to grow and learn more. He is also a generous man. He has helped a village in Africa to become more sustainable and less dependent by showing them how to grow organic.

In a time when I had no budget for the HC and 10 acres to plant something in, his donation of cucurbit seeds was a godsend. His idea to have a fall festival put the Center on our community's map as well as making it an annual fall destination.

His continued support not only to the Center, but to ISU, has inspired the Center's volunteers and our students. So we want to say thank you Mac for everything you have given us. And congratulations – it is well deserved!

JC



Schedule of Events

- March 7, **Home, Lawn & Garden Day** sponsored by University of Illinois Extension-McLean County Master Gardeners from 8:00 am – 3:00 pm at Central Catholic in Bloomington
- April 23 **Nutri-Fest 2009** sponsored by ISU Wellness Program Wednesday, April 23 from 11:00 am – 1:30 pm in the Circus Room, Bone Student Center, ISU
- April 17-18, **Illinois Sustainable Living & Wellness Expo** sponsored by Ecology Action Center and Illinois Wesleyan University Friday: 10:00 am -3:00 pm and Saturday 9:00 am —4:00 pm in the Shirk Center, IWU
- April 25, Field Trip to Star Hill Arboretum

Field trips are open to Friends of the Center and their families, as well as horticulture students, faculty and volunteers. If you are interested, please call Jessica to learn more at 309-438-3496.

PUMPKIN BREAD PUDDING WITH A CARAMEL BUTTERED RUM SAUCE

Ingredients

10 Cups Flaxseed Bread cubed set aside.

Mix in a bowl:

15oz Pumpkin

1 Cup Brown Sugar

2 Cups Fat Free Half and Half

3 Eggs

1 1/2 tsp Vanilla

2 tsp Cinnamon

2 tsp Pumpkin Pie Spice

1/2 tsp Cloves

1/2 tsp Ginger

1/4 Cup Dark Rum

1 Cup Chopped Pecans

Fold in bread until mixture is absorbed. Spray a 9 x 13 casserole dish and pour in mixture. Bake for 35 minutes at 350° degrees.

Caramel Buttered Rum Sauce

Ingredients

1/2 Cup Butter

1 Cup Brown Sugar

1/4 Cup Dark Rum

1 tsp Vanilla

1/2 Cup Fat Free Half and Half

Melt butter in a saucepan, add brown sugar and mix until smooth. Add rum and vanilla continuously stirring slowly add half and half. Sauce will thicken as it heats.

Serve Pumpkin Bread Pudding topped with Caramel Sauce and dusted with powdered sugar.

Recipe created by Susan Waltrip a Dietetic Intern in the Department of Family and Consumer Sciences for the ISU Horticulture's Autumnal Festival on October 4, 2008.

Volunteer Spotlight

Shirley Murphy



When I was a kid, my parents didn't have a garden but I loved to go next door to my aunt's and uncle's house and hang out in their garden. My uncle was a carpenter and a perfectionist, and his garden was no exception. Every row was perfectly straight, weeds dared not grow and the earthworms were enormous! My uncle would allow me to hunt for tomato worms and eventually pick the tomatoes, harvest the peas and beans and remove any dead foliage that marred the garden's perfection. Every fall my aunt would assign me the task of gathering the seed pods from the moss rose beds that circled their house (which I later learned were Portulaca and weren't roses at all!), opening them and carefully placing the seeds in envelopes. Do you know how many tiny, tiny seeds are in a moss rose seed pod? If I dropped a single seed on the sidewalk, my aunt could see it from her kitchen window. She'd stand on the back porch with a frown on her face and tell me that I was wasting those seeds, which would either be eaten



by birds or blow into the yard and grow there, only to be mowed and killed. I didn't really think that feeding the birds was a waste of seed, but I didn't argue because maybe they wouldn't let me

play in the garden. We called it work, but it sure felt like play to me! In retrospect, I suspect that the moss rose seed collection was a scheme concocted by my aunt and mother to keep me out of trouble for a couple of days. My mom could always tell when I'd been in the garden because the back of my pants always had soil marks where I'd been sitting between the rows and I would arrive at the dinner table with soil samples under my nails. As my fellow HC volunteers can attest, I still sit in the dirt when I'm working and there are usually either grass or soil marks on the back of my pants. Today, however, I've discovered that a nailbrush is an indispensable grooming tool!

Fast forward a few decades: my good friend Cathy told me that she'd learned about the Horticulture Center and had met the amazingly creative and energetic director, Jessica. She thought I might be interested in volunteering, or at least checking it out. The timing was perfect! My gardening aunt and uncle had recently passed away and those nostalgic feelings were strong, I was working far too many hours and needed a diversion, and my own yard had reached the point where I was running out of space to plant or try new things. So I completed the volunteer application and went to the first volunteer work night in May of 2007. I was hooked! There wasn't much to see at that point—just a shed, some holding beds, the previous year's pumpkin patch and a few test plots—but when Jessica showed us the plans for the Horticulture Center, she helped all of us to visualize her dream. Now, not quite two years later, the Viburnum Walk, Children's Garden, Nutraceutical Gardens, Volunteer Garden, Children and Elders' Forest and wind turbine have transformed the space. Knowing that I had a small role to play in the physical transformation of that space is great, but the knowledge I've gained through labor and research and the friendships I've developed with the HC staff and volunteers have

transformed my life. It is so rewarding to be working in the gardens on a Saturday morning or weekday evening and have a member of the community stop to say, "I've been watching this place grow and wondering what it is.... Can I bring my grandchildren to walk through the Children's Garden?" or "Is it okay to take some pictures?"

During 2009, I'm looking forward to continuing to work in the vegetable section of the Nutraceutical Garden, using what we learned last summer and adding new plants and structures. We are all excited about the new conifer and sustainability gardens and cannot wait to use the power from the wind turbine and solar array. Last year I had the opportunity not only to learn about the most nutritious Broccoli cultivars but how to use a power saw to cut the wood to build trellises and benches. That's one of the great things about volunteering at the HC: you don't have to know much about plants to be part the team! If your talents are in the carpentry, communication or painting area, you can help. If you can dig a hole or push a wheelbarrow, you'll be welcomed with open arms. If you can't tell the difference between a weed and a flower, that's okay. Someone will show you which one is supposed to be there ... and it just might be the weed! But if you just want to sit on a bench in the Volunteer Garden and watch the sun setting over the prairie and sunflowers, that's fine. Just be careful! The HC bug may bite you and you won't be able to stay away. You may experience uncontrollable urges to pull weeds, dig holes or move rocks, but that's okay—you'll have plenty of company. As for me, I still feel as if I'm playing instead of working at the Hort Center, just like when I was a kid.

Share your knowledge, Share your time, Share your experiences

by volunteering at the Illinois State University Horticulture Center.

To become a volunteer at the ISU Horticulture Center go to <http://www.horticulturecenter.ilstu.edu/events/Volunteer.shtml>



**The ISU Horticulture Center would like to thank you
our Volunteers, Friends and donors for a successful season in 2008!**

Mary Akers
Mary Jo Adams
Kate Arthur
Mike and Linda Busing
Sharon Becker
Carolyn Bode
Jason Chambers
John and Katie Chambers
Laura Coe
Mac Condill
Jonathan Damery
Russ and Clint Durango
Suzann Erlenbush
Monica Fuller
Judy Gion
Janet Goucher
Eric Jome
Cathy Kelly

Dave Kennell
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Bill and Patti Mitchell
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Kent and Eric Seymour

David Sparks
Richard Steffen
Karen Stephens
Andrew Sutter
Janet Tulley
Brittnay Whitted
Andy & Etta Whitted
Kevin Wiand
Shayna Wildermuth
Randy Winter

AGR classes 120, 130, 252, 254, & 354
Boy Scout Troop #91
CAST—Dean Wood
Green View Garden Center
Growmark – Dave Gentry



Become a Friend of the Horticulture Center

Your support is essential to the Horticulture Center's growth and development.

With your help the Center can continue to provide high-quality learning, research and facilities to students and the community.

Gift: Student \$10.00 Non-student \$25.00 Additional Gift \$_____

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