



cucurbits

*plants in the gourd family, such as
cucumbers, squash, pumpkins, and melons*

late summer · 2011

**Horticulture
Center**

Illinois State University

Celebrating 1911 by Jessica Chambers

When ISU celebrated its sesquicentennial birthday in 2007, the Horticulture Center's theme garden was the 1857 Garden. So it seemed like a natural and comfortable choice to do a 1911 Garden to celebrate the Department of Agriculture's 100th birthday.

In 1857 vegetable gardens were fenced from the animals. The garden consisted of blocked planting areas at least 4 feet by 4 feet with paths connecting all these planting areas on all sides, like a grid. It was a planting method brought over by the Europeans, a method conducive to easy planting, weeding, and harvest because of the reach of one's arm from any angle into the block planting. At the time everyone had a garden.

Move forward 50 years and the Industrial Revolution was in full force. With the invention of cast iron and steel implements, gone were the blocked plantings, and in were the straight rows. Animals were fenced in, not gardens. Farms became bigger, buildings were framed not logged, and clothing was made on a treadle-sewing machine not stitched by hand. It cost 2 cents to mail a letter, 4,800 dollars to buy a home, and Taft was president. There were advertisements for both buggies and autos in our local *Pantagraph* newspaper.

Catalogs of the era had colorful lithographs and drawings of different fruits and vegetables that were available to the homeowner. This summer *National Geographic* had an article titled, "Food Ark," spotlighting a study done in 1983 by the Rural Advancement Foundation International which found that 93 percent of the varieties of crops such as radishes, tomatoes, and sweet corn that were grown in 1903 are now extinct.

While your options of planting a diverse group of one specific vegetable may be gone forever, the same methods for planting a home garden including using a garden hoe, rake, and trowel are still being used today. In the early 1900s a wheel hoe was used to break up the soil between garden rows. Today we use a tiller but more modern forms of the wheel hoe are available on the Internet to those who are environmentally conscious and prefer human power to gas polluters.

As part of the 1911 theme, we established a scaled down version of a typical 1911 vegetable garden. The 1911 method of growing vegetables has proven to be more difficult than the current method we use in the Nutraceutical Vegetable Garden with raised beds of compost, peat, and vermiculite—no soil.

In the early 1900s the typical front yard had shade trees, often a maple or elm, and a vine growing by the porch. In the backyard were a modest flower garden, a vegetable garden, and "drying lines" for wet laundry.

On Thursday, September 8th we will have an open house where you can come and see some of the 1911 heirlooms that we are growing. Come and compare for yourself the two vegetable gardens. There will also be a 1911 Garden Walk showcasing perennials and shrubs that were planted around homes at that time to help give a feel of the experience of horticulture in 1911, the inaugural year of the Illinois State University Department of Agriculture.

“Better food, better health, better living—all these the home garden offers you in abundance. And the price of every worth-while thing—honest, cheerful patient work.”

*—Home Vegetable Gardening
Frederick Frye Rockwell*

AUTUMNAL FESTIVAL

Saturday, October 1 • 9 a.m.—4 p.m.

Autumnal is not an easy word to say. The first year we grew cucurbits, someone suggested we have an end of the year celebration. I wanted a special name to call this celebration and spent a good amount of time thinking about what to call it. There are lots of "fall festivals" and some "October festivals," but very few "autumnal festivals." My husband joked that I made the word up. People in my own department had difficulty saying the word. People still have difficulty with it; they often get a running start and say the word quickly—get it over with and no one may notice. I wanted a different name because I wanted the festival to be different than other "fall festivals." We have the pumpkins, corn maze, hay rides, and caramel apples, but we also have the gardens. It is an opportunity to see the last flowering stages of what our magnificent Illinois prairies once looked like, full of asters and golden rod. It is an opportunity for individuals to see the grains blooming

in the Grain Garden, which includes the large plumes of amaranth and the large seed heads of sorghum. There is also an opportunity to come and explore all the colors and tall textured plants in the Children's Garden. I invite you to come to our 6th Autumnal Festival on Saturday, October 1st. Come and have fun with all the fall favorite activities and goodies and also enjoy the beauty and serenity of the gardens.

“I would rather sit on a pumpkin and have it all to myself, than be crowded on a velvet cushion.”

—Henry David Thoreau

CALLING ALL SCARECROWS

Our summer undergraduate assistant, Katelynn Clement, has a new charge—get 100 scarecrows for the Autumnal Festival to commemorate the 100 years of Agriculture. Typically we have about 20 to 25 scarecrows so we really need your help! The scarecrows are used to decorate the center for the festival but its main purpose is as a fundraiser for the Children's Garden. Scarecrows will be auctioned off in a silent auction process and then taken home by the highest bidder. Find the entry form at horticulturecenter.illinoisstate.edu/events/autumn.shtml. Please help us to make this 100th year of the Agriculture Department a memorable one this Autumnal Festival!

4th at the Hort



Children's Garden Party

This year's Children's Garden party theme was Celebrating 1911. It is the continuing theme for all of the center's events this year in reference to the Department of Agriculture's 100th birthday which the center is part of. The party took place on the warm and sunny evening of June 29th. There were many fun activities including 1911 trivia, period games, posy making, gourd painting, and planting flowers in the garden. The evening was complete with cupcakes and lemonade and the attendees' family picture taken in the garden by our own photographer extraordinaire, Karen Stephens.



GARDEN PARTY TRIVIA:

Who was president in 1911?

How much did it cost to mail a letter?

- a. 1 cent
- c. A nickel
- b. 2 cents
- d. 7 cents

ANSWERS - President Taft • 2 cents

HOW TO INSTALL A FLAGSTONE PATIO: THE AGR 252: URBAN LANDSCAPE

MANAGEMENT METHOD By Jacob Kuban

STEP #1: MEASURING

Designing and taking measurements for the new flagstone patio in the Volunteer Garden at the ISU Horticulture Center began while the bitter winter wind still whipped. Aaron Roels and Robert LeVar, horticulture students in Urban Landscape Management, led the way in designing and taking proper measurements for the project. The measuring is necessary in order to know how much material is needed.

STEP #2: EXCAVATION

As the warmer spring days came around, excavation began. The students, Mike Busing, the center's foreman, David Kopsell, and Jessica Chambers combined to create an extraordinary team of horticultural experience, knowledge, and interest. The compaction of the base materials included about six inches of CA6 (gravel and crushed limestone) followed with about one inch of sand. Then, a generous portion of field stone that now functions as a retaining wall for the backdrop of the patio was located and delivered by Brandon, Andy, and Nate Whitted. Between the work of the team of students and professors, the Whitteds, the Kubota tractor, and a couple of wheel barrows, the retaining wall and the base to the patio was completed.



STEP #3: FLAGSTONE INSTALLATION

The two tons of flagstone for the project were purchased from Sunburst Nursery. Fitting the flagstone pieces together is an intricate process of matching up sides and chipping off corners. The sand base is used to hold the pieces of flagstone in place. But when finally pieced together, the flagstone makes a great patio. For some finishing touches, we put down some topsoil and grass seed to grow in the spaces between the flagstones. Our last step was to mulch around the perimeter of the patio.



STEP #4: ENJOY

This multiple week project provided more than a learning experience. It will be a place for visitors to relax and enjoy the center for years to come. While many individuals were necessary to make this project a reality it would not have been possible without the extreme generosity and thoughtfulness of Kent Seymour, a Horticulture Center volunteer who donated the money for the project.



Volunteer Article by Monica Fuller

Flashback two-and-a-half years. A soul-searching young secretary is deeply engrossed in an instant-message conversation with her best friend. They're fantasizing: What would it be like to live their passions? Young Secretary loves flowers, and Best Friend wants to teach music. They bemoan the inflated cost of earning degrees and fear putting forth the effort and money when diplomas come with no guarantee of happiness. Types Young Secretary, "I'd volunteer and get my feet wet in horticulture if only there were a place that would have me..."

Dramatic pause

Best Friend, helpful as always, does a quick Google search for horticulture in Normal, Illinois, then copies and pastes a link into the chat discussion window and sends it to Young Secretary: "http://horticulturecenter.illinoisstate.edu/." One click later, Young Secretary peruses the ISU Hort Center website and can hardly contain her excitement upon reading they take volunteers!



Thus began my tenure as a volunteer at the Hort Center. A few years later and slightly less young, I'm so glad I found my way there. Yes, I get to see what horticulture students do for class projects and hear about the jobs they hold after they graduate, and that's hugely valuable information for my mission to learn more about the field. More than that, though, I'm doing what I love—playing in the dirt, watching things grow, seeing joy dawn on the faces of visitors, and making friends with fellow volunteers who geek out just as much as I do when they come across a

plant combination they've never considered or a growing technique they haven't tried.

It's an easy-going group of workers with varying degrees of knowledge and enthusiasm. Jessica Chambers, the Hort Center director, provides vision and direction and, despite her very busy schedule, works side-by-side with us, always with a friendly word to see how our lives are going. The others are graduate and undergraduate students, master gardeners, or lay-people like me who are passionate about green things and are excited by the constant improvements we see happening in the gardens.

It's low pressure. Generally, there are at least two opportunities a week to help out. If you can make it there every time, great! If you can make it there once a month, they're still happy to see you. No guilt. I like that.

It makes for great story-telling. Like dead-heading in the herbaceous garden only to find a red-tailed hawk perched on the arbor a mere 8 feet away, ignoring us as it scanned the area for prey. Or finding a snake skin in the comfrey bush. Or watching Jess' kids play laser tag between flower beds at the Fourth at the Hort. And all those times Kent put on the pumpkin suit for the Autumnal Fest, and the fun we had creating masterpieces from plastic bottles for the

Children's Garden Party event, and the treasure hunt that is harvesting cucurbits every fall... and the beauty and satisfaction of watching the sun set to the west after a hard night's work with good friends. And...and...and...

Fall is in the air, and soon it will be time to begin making new Hort Center memories. I'm looking forward to packing up my shovel and clippers and kneeling pad, returning them to their semi-permanent home in the trunk of my Hyundai, and having to clean dirt from under my fingernails on a regular basis. It's gonna be a good year. I can feel it.

Easter Egg Hunt At Hc

The first Annual Easter Egg Hunt, hosted by Illinois State's Collegiate FFA, was held at the Horticulture Center on Sunday, April 17, 2011. This event was open to ages 2 and up and gave the kids an opportunity to take pictures with the Easter Bunny and also see live baby bunnies. After the kids had finished finding all their Easter Eggs many families walked around the Horticulture Center enjoying the gardens, refreshments, and the great weather.





Katelynn Clement

A very special acknowledgement and thank you goes out to our very own Katelynn Clement for sharing her beautiful voice when she sang the Anthem on June 16th at ISU night at the Cornbelters.

Schedule of events

September 8, 5-7:30 p.m.

Celebrating 1911: An Evening Affair

The Agriculture Department is celebrating its 100th birthday this year. As part of that celebration the Horticulture Center will establish a 1911 garden. Spend the evening strolling through the gardens and learn more about the type of food that was grown 100 years ago.

September 9, 4-7:30 p.m.

Celebrating 1911: A Fundraising Dinner Event

A fundraiser event in the evening that includes a tour of the gardens, a guest presenter, and concludes with dinner that has a menu that uses vegetables and herbs from the 1911 garden as well as other local foods. Reservations required.

October 1, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Autumnal Festival

Come and celebrate autumn with your family at our annual Autumnal Festival. Enjoy family activities, purchase your pumpkins and gourds, get lost in our corn maze and pick out your favorite scarecrow.

**November 17, 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Brown Ballroom,
Bone Student Center**

Healthy You, Healthy Earth

ISU's annual wellness and environmental fair. The goal of the event is to highlight the seven dimensions of wellness, to share information, provide resources, and educate those in attendance about healthy lifestyles and environmental stewardship.

The center will have an information booth and exhibit at the fair.

November 18

Volunteer Celebration

A private celebration for volunteers and staff

YES, MY GIFT MATTERS.

GIFT DESIGNATION

HORTICULTURE CENTER/5025547

PAYMENT OPTIONS

OPTION 1: Check. A check for my gift of \$_____ payable to Illinois State University Foundation is enclosed.

OPTION 2: Credit Card: VISA MASTERCARD DISCOVER

A single gift in the amount of \$_____

A recurring gift in the amount of \$_____,
ending on ____/____/____ (month/day/year),
to be paid: annually quarterly semi-annually

Name on card Account number

Expiration date Signature

OPTION 3: Make a gift online at IllinoisState.edu/giving

DONOR INFORMATION

Name(s) University ID (if known)

Address

City State Zip

Preferred email address

() _____ mobile home

Preferred phone number

FURTHER GIVING INFORMATION

I (and/or my spouse/partner) work for a matching gift company.

I would like more information on including Illinois State University in my estate plans or have already included the University in my estate plans.

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horticulture center

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HOURS OF OPERATION

dawn to dusk

LOCATION

the center is located on Raab Road in Normal between Heartland and Lincoln Colleges.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

contact Jessica Chambers at (309)-438-3496
or email Horticulture@IllinoisState.edu

the ISU Horticulture Center is part of the Department of Agriculture within the College of Applied Science and Technology