

News Letter

City Hall, Iowa City, Iowa 52240
www.projectgreen.org

GROW TO
REACH
ENVIRONMENTAL
EXCELLENCE
NOW



PUBLISHED IN EARLY SPRING AND LATE FALL

LATE FALL 2019

Project GREEN and the Iowa City Public Library present Second Sunday 2020 Winter Garden Forums

Meeting Room A at the library, 2-4 p.m. • Free admission for all

Another challenging and unpredictable gardening season is behind us. We can now reflect on our successes and disappointments and make plans for new and exciting outcomes in 2020.

We hope you can find inspiration in the three Garden Forums we've planned for the new year. We have a wildlife specialist to give us ideas on attracting desired wildlife to our properties and a conservation ecologist to explore the world of native plants that attract the pollinators we need. Rounding out our offerings is an award-winning film that will take us through the creative process of Piet Oudolf, a much-lauded Dutch garden designer and nurseryman. Mark your calendars. January will be here soon.



January 12, 2020

Kristen Morrow, Johnson County Conservation naturalist, will address prairie plants and pollinators. A native Iowan from St. Ansgar, Kristen grew up exploring the banks of the Cedar River.

An Iowa State University alum, Kristen studied environmental science, wetlands, streams, and river health.

She worked as a backpacking guide/naturalist in New Mexico, for a watershed restoration organization in northern Idaho, and in Iowa for The Nature Conservancy's traveling restoration crew. Kristen also worked as a naturalist in northern Minnesota before settling in Johnson County.

its emphasis on sustainable, sensible plantings. He is a leading figure of the New Perennial movement, using designs and plant configurations in bold assemblages of herbaceous perennials and grasses chosen for both their structure and their color.



March 8, 2020

Adam Janke presents "Making Landscapes Work for Wildlife."

Earlier this year, weather conditions kept Adam Janke, assistant professor and Extension wildlife specialist in the Department of Natural Resource Ecology and Management at Iowa State University, from coming to Iowa City. In March, he will speak to home gardeners and professional horticulturists and

landscapers about designs, methods, and plant materials that make your property a haven for the wildlife you desire. Adam is a certified Wildlife Society associate wildlife biologist and earned degrees in wildlife conservation and management from Purdue University (BS), Ohio State University (MS), and South Dakota State University (PhD).



February 9, 2020

Gardens of Piet Oudolf will be featured in February, as Garden Forum patrons will be treated to a film by award-winning filmmaker and director Thomas Piper. The 1-hour, 15-minute documentary captured garden designer Piet Oudolf as he designed gardens for New York's High Line, Hauser and Wirth's prairie garden

in Somerset, England, and his own private garden at Hummelo in Holland. *Five Seasons: The Gardens of Piet Oudolf* by Argot Pictures was released in 2018. The Dutch landscape designer's work is recognizable for its dreamy romanticism and is often copied for

*Attendance at the forum provides Iowa State University Extension Master Gardeners education CEUs. Second Sunday Garden Forums are televised on the Iowa City Public Library Cable TV channel, and available after the event on Project GREEN's website – www.projectgreen.org. Visit www.projectgreen.org for more information or on our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/www.projectgreen.org/>

Project GREEN Launches Open Gardens Weekend

By Beth Cody

When Project GREEN members decided to try a new kind of garden tour to raise money for the organization last summer, we weren't sure if it would work. Instead of charging visitors to see a handful of gardens, we modeled our new event on the Garden Walk held in Buffalo, New York: We encouraged Iowa City residents to open their gardens, and made the event free for visitors. Corporate sponsors provided the funds we sought.



But we worried: Would local garden owners volunteer to share their gardens? We needn't have worried—**over thirty passionate gardeners** generously opened their gardens for our event.

But would we be able to find sponsors to support the event and raise money for Project GREEN? Yes! **A dozen local businesses joined in** and made our new event possible. But would anyone attend our new event? People might be



Cheryl Svatos has created a paradise in her tiny backyard. We're so glad she shared it with us!

confused about how it worked or where to pick up the garden maps. No worries—**nearly two thousand maps were picked up**, and it is estimated that more than **six hundred visitors** attended this first year's event, despite the weekend's sweltering hot weather.

Because so many gardens were open, more than four thousand garden-visitor encounters occurred over the weekend of July 13–14, 2019. Think of it: four thousand opportunities for people to be inspired, to learn, and to enjoy. And the event raised money for Project GREEN as well.

We got great feedback about the new event. Tour-goers were encouraged and inspired by the gardens they saw, and especially by the gardeners they talked with, thanks to the relaxed pace of the two-day event. Here's what one visitor had to say:

This tour was a potpourri of individual gardens and individual gardeners. I even got to talk to owners of the houses and gardens, which has rarely been possible in the past... I loved the quirky gardens. I loved the pride and affection these gardeners had in their little pieces of heaven. And I loved talking with them.



A beautiful scene in John Eggenburg's Japanese-inspired garden.

Project GREEN members spoke with a number of young homeowners who felt inspired to begin gardening, and who hope to one day open their gardens for the event. What could be a better outcome? And think how this effect will multiply over future years of Project GREEN's event!

Our hearty thanks to the gardeners who endured the heat to share their personal gardens with the public for

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Dennis Naaktgeboren's backyard "Fool's Paradise Garden" (garden style: abstract ridiculousness) was a highlight of the weekend. Although in an unfinished state (and whose garden is actually finished, really?), it was tremendously imaginative, and included sculptures made from found objects, as well as beautiful plants. We hope he will share it again next year, so we can see how his work-in-progress progresses.



Shirley Lekin's forest of statuesque lilies had to be seen to be believed. Some of them were seven feet tall!!

Project GREEN's cause, helping the Iowa City area "grow to reach environmental excellence now." Not only did the event raise money to be used for public landscaping, but would-be gardeners are now inspired to make their own yards more beautiful too—a double win for the beauty of our community.

We honored our garden hosts at an ice cream social at the Ashton House Project GREEN Gardens to finish the Open Gardens Weekend. A delicious conclusion to a wonderful weekend of gardens!

Project GREEN looks forward to continuing this successful new event for many years to come, and we anticipate that the Open Gardens Weekend will soon become one of Iowa City's prominent annual cultural events.

We hope you too will consider sharing your garden in next year's Open Gardens Weekend 2020, June 27 & 28. ☘



At the Eggenburg garden you never know where a garden path will lead you. We hope you will attend next year's Open Gardens Weekend to find out!



This 80-year-old rhubarb patch at John and Beth Beasley's farm garden was truly impressive.

Many thanks to our generous sponsors for making this garden-filled weekend possible!

Cat Clinic of Iowa City

Chad Burtch State Farm

Hills Bank

Hy-Vee

Iowa City Landscaping

Lenoch & Cilek Ace Hardware

Rindy, Inc.

Tallgrass Business Resources

UI Community Credit Union

Urban Acres Real Estate

U.S. Bank

Project GREEN at the Farmers Market

By Lorie Leo

This spring, for the first time in half a century, no GREEN Garden Fair took place in Iowa City. Overhead costs, unpredictable weather, competing plant sales, and volunteer fatigue were taking their toll, so it was time for something new.

In May and June, people were delighted to discover Project GREEN parked at the northeast corner of the Iowa City Farmers Market. In spite of record cold and soggy soils, loyal volunteers dug an impressive array of flowering plants, ferns, trees, and shrubs for market shoppers. (Did you know that several of our volunteers have been digging plants for Project GREEN for well over thirty years?!)



freshly dug iris rhizomes found their way to many new homes. Gardeners like Shirley Lekin and Monica Hoherz, who were busy preparing their yards for our Open Gardens Weekend, still found time to dig and pot up choice offerings from their exquisite gardens. We made a special effort to include milkweed, asters, and other plants beneficial to pollinators. At our final market, shoppers were fascinated by the live monarch butterflies Debbie Dunn brought, which somehow “hatched” right on cue! Many thanks to all who contributed, either with plant material or the staffing of our booth. Thanks, too, to all those in the community who supported us with purchases.



Each week's market featured new offerings as different plants came into bloom. The season began with Nora Steinbrech's early wildflowers, ferns from Sue Mullins, and other

flowering signs of spring. A week or two later, Stan and Pat Podhajsky's bleeding hearts were featured. Around Memorial Day, our spectacular peonies once again proved irresistible. In June, Kathy Kramer's assortment of pink astilbe in full bloom dazzled shoppers, and Linda Prybil's

While comments were favorable, and market days were a lot of fun, in the end we felt that the revenue did not justify all the volunteer hours required. In 2020, we will explore having plant sales at the Ashton House Project GREEN Gardens on Park Road, to minimize the amount of plant hauling and loading.



Market volunteers included: Lorie Leo in the front, and Mary Lowder, Shirley Lekin, and Connie Goeb in the back.

As we continue to explore other options for funding our work, please include Project GREEN in your annual charitable giving so that we can continue our worthwhile projects, and our veteran volunteers can rest their weary backs! ✿



Happy Farmers Market customers found a wide variety of plants, ferns, trees, and shrubs at the Project GREEN booth throughout the market season.

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Mary Gantz GREEN Grants for Schools

By Jo Pattschull

This fall, just in time, Project GREEN finished the annual Kindergarten Tree Project in conjunction with the Iowa City Community School District. Winter seems to have arrived early this year, but the chosen trees were in the ground for the first snowfall. Chuck Porto and Iowa City Landscaping did an amazing job of selecting and planting twenty trees at the ICCSD elementary schools.

Last fall, the Iowa City Council adopted the black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*) as the city's official flower. Project GREEN, in turn, provided seeds of this native perennial to the ICCSD, to be planted around school signage at all

district schools to promote our city flower.

During the summer months, Project GREEN worked with the ICCSD through funding to design and plant the entrance gardens for the new Christine Grant Elementary School. The gardens, incomplete at this time, will receive additional planting in the spring. It is the hope that they will provide enjoyment for those who enter the school—and possibly some educational opportunities for the kids to learn about the nature of plants and pollinators. ❁



These are the new trees and their new homes:

- 5 tulip trees, at Horn, Grant, Hoover, Lemme, and Coralville Central
- 3 'Autumn Radiance' maples, at Penn, Twain, and Hills
- 1 silver linden, at Garner
- 2 'Red Jewel' crabapples at Wood and Weber
- 1 redbud, at Longfellow
- 2 Burgundy Belle maples, at Lincoln and Shimek
- 1 bur oak, at Kirkwood
- 2 ironwoods, at Lucas and Alexander
- 1 'White Shield' osage orange, at Borlaug



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COMMUNITY
SCHOOL DISTRICT

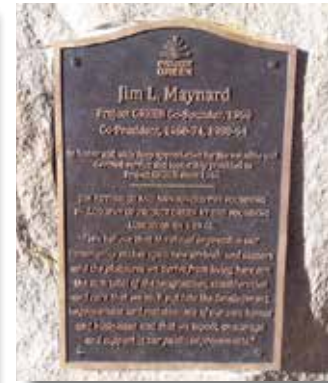
50 Trees for 50 Years at Ashton House

Stories and photos by Laura Hawks

One of the trees planted at Ashton House as part of the “50 Trees for 50 Years” project is this black tupelo (*Nyssa sylvatica*). The black tupelo species, which prefers moist but well-drained soil, turns bright red in the fall. The Ashton tupelos are planted within viewing distance of the hiking trail that can be entered from the Project GREEN Gardens. ❁



Installed as a part of the Project GREEN “50 Trees for 50 Years” effort at Ashton House, a plaque celebrates Jim Maynard, a retired professional landscape architect, for his contributions to the founding of Project GREEN. For more than fifty years, Jim’s landscape design and urban planning has enhanced Iowa City’s parkways, urban spaces, and parks. ❁



Jim Maynard

Project GREEN Needs You!

By Cindy Parsons

Since the 2018 celebration of Project GREEN’s fiftieth anniversary, we’ve had a year-long season of reflection—on our past, as well as on the present and the promise of our future.

We have experienced some big changes recently, which we hope you may actually have noticed. For the first time in almost fifty years, no GREEN Garden Fair. A combination of increasing overhead costs, worn-out volunteers, and competition with other plant sales took its toll. To replace the income generated by the fair, our major source of funding, we are trying other revenue-generating projects, such as the Farmers Market and plant sales at Ashton House.

We have received three grant awards during 2019. The MidAmerican Energy “Trees Please” grant funded trees planted at Ashton House. We used a grant from Think Iowa City to offset advertising and signage expenses for our Open Gardens Weekend. And we recently won a grant through the Community Foundation of Johnson County for new permanent signage and replacement of aging plant materials at some of our project locations. We plan to seek out and apply for additional grant funding in 2020.

Grants and volunteering are essential; Project GREEN has always been the creation of volunteers who have organized, dug, planted, met, planned, exhibited, toured, and carried out all the tasks required to Reach for Environmental Excellence Now (you do know that’s the phrase behind our acronym!).

But now, private donations to Project GREEN are more important than ever. We received a generous bequest from the estate of Marilyn J. Irey, a school teacher for many years in the Davenport, DeWitt, and Bennett School systems. Her bequests benefited several local nonprofit organizations, and Project GREEN was fortunate to be one of them.

Our need for donor support of our goals is critical as we plan for 2020 and well beyond. These are our goals:

- Continuation of our Kindergarten Trees project.
- Monday morning volunteer sessions at the Ashton House Project GREEN Gardens (over 600 hours contributed during 2019), with funding for plant materials.
- Fall and spring newsletters.
- Continued oversight and maintenance of parkways and projects, including Melrose Avenue, Iowa Avenue, Highway 6 Bypass, North Dubuque Street, Mormon Trek viaduct planters, and Ashton House gardens.
- Open Gardens Weekend (funded through business sponsorships.)
- *Winter Garden Forums, educational programs in partnership with the Iowa City Public Library in January, February, and March each year.
- Growth of our endowment fund at the Community Foundation of Johnson County.

We are also embarking on a new local tree-planting initiative, in partnership with the City of Iowa City, the University of Iowa, neighborhood associations, and other local volunteer and civic organizations. Planning is under way, and joint meetings are taking place, so look for more information about this soon.

We are so grateful for your previous contributions. We ask again for your support to carry on our important work of making our community beautiful and welcoming to our neighbors and guests. **We pledge to grow your gift into beautiful landscapes that can be enjoyed by all.**

Won’t you please use the enclosed envelope to send in your contribution today? You can also look at our website at www.projectgreen.org for our wish list of other items. ❁



Ashton House Project GREEN Gardens 2019

By Diane Allen

We had a busy spring, summer, and fall caring for the Ashton House Project GREEN Gardens, located on the eight-acre Iowa City park along Park Road and Normandy Drive, adjacent to the meandering (and well behaved this year!) Iowa River.

Our volunteer work began Saturday, April 20, with extra help. Kirkwood College Environmental Club students helped us plant 240 gladiolus bulbs, and members of the local congregation of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints assisted with spring cleanup. Together, these volunteer groups donated 184 hours toward beautifying this lovely park area.

Project GREEN volunteers began their weekly Monday morning work sessions on May 6. Our group met for the next twenty-three weeks, weeding, deadheading, planting, watering, raking, cleaning the garage, organizing closets inside the Ashton House, clearing sticks and branches, sawing broken limbs, sharing poison ivy stories, protecting ducklings, transplanting, fertilizing and watering the containers of beautiful annuals on the pillar and front porch, finding a morel mushroom—and then playing rock-paper-scissors to see who took it home.

On Friday, May 31, Project GREEN volunteers met to plant the large flowerbed at the park entrance to the hiking trail on the corner of Park Road and Rocky Shore Drive. Filled with flowering annuals and perennials, along with shrubs and trees, this bed was a joy to watch over the summer and fall. Volunteers regularly deadheaded, weeded, and watered, keeping it beautiful for passerby bicyclists, runners, and walkers.

The Nancy Seiberling Peony Garden and the Normandy Drive peony line-out bed were given lots of attention with weeding and deadheading. The peonies were photographed by Rina Sjolund's husband to help identify varieties.

Summer progressed with the planting of more than fifty black-eyed Susans along the parking lot entrance and on either side of the bridge leading to the Ashton House. We learned that annual begonias are yummy to deer. Volunteers worked making gardens ready to welcome visitors to the Project GREEN Open Gardens Weekend on June 13 and 14, and a celebratory ice cream social was held there on June 14.

The month of August was very dry. The challenge of connecting and

pulling multiple lengths of hose was formidable. In mid-August we planted twenty--three donated blooming mums and two flats of ajuga. On September 16, we planted twenty-nine donated ligularia west of the bridge leading to the Ashton House. We appreciate plant donations to Project GREEN—they make the grounds even lovelier.

Thanks to Biolife Plasma Services for joining Project GREEN volunteers the morning of September 30. We spent the four-hour work session clearing sticks and branches, collecting leaves, trimming shrubs, and cutting down smaller dead trees.

On October 14, we planted more than one hundred surprise lilies behind the Nancy Seiberling Peony Garden. Our last Monday together, on

October 28, we planted nineteen rhododendrons, two dwarf Little Devil ninebark shrubs, and 405 trumpet daffodil bulbs. We cleared the large bed at the entrance to the hiking trail and dug up canna bulbs to save for 2020. The Project GREEN 2019 season was finished.

Project GREEN greatly appreciates the assistance of Parks and Recreation staff member Steve Erickson and crew for the removal of debris collected each Monday.

Our last event of the season was a celebration brunch. All Ashton House Project GREEN Gardens volunteers were invited. Discussions centered on 2019 achievements and failures, as well as our plans for 2020.

The total number of 2019 volunteer hours at the Project GREEN Gardens at the Ashton House exceeded six hundred! What an amazing accomplishment by an amazing group. Our sincere thanks go to all who participated. 🌿



Photos by Laura Hawks

If you are interested in a lasting contribution to honor a loved one, consider the donation of a tree or bench at the Ashton House Project GREEN Gardens.

- Cost of the tree program is \$150–\$275, for the tree and its continued maintenance.
- Cost of the bench program is \$1,200 per bench, including a commemorative plaque, materials, and a concrete base. Benches are steel-reinforced and covered with a rust-preventing powder coating.

Questions about the Memorial Tree and Bench Program can be directed to the Iowa City Parks and Recreation Department at 319-356-5100 or email to: iowacityprojectgreen@gmail.com



PROJECT GREEN

City Hall
410 E. Washington St.
Iowa City, Iowa 52240

Return Service Requested

A Natural Tradition

Fall season's final show
is color-filled for a limit of our time
as ready familiar colors fascinate.
Then, flashy red shades,
admired as fiery foliage,
detach, dressed in new tan,
drift into their surroundings,
useful for man and beast.
We see and learn.
Some of us roam parks,
others board buses
to faraway rural scenery.
Homebound folks witness the changes
in their neighborhoods,
continuing to marvel at the colors.

By Max J. Molleston, Project GREEN
steering committee member

CLIP AND SAVE

Second Sunday 2020 Winter Garden Forums

Iowa City Public Library,
Meeting Room A, 2-4 p.m.

Sunday, January 12, 2 p.m.

Johnson County Conservation Naturalist
Kristen Morrow

Sunday, February 9, 2 p.m.

Gardens of Piet Oudolf

Sunday, March 8, 2 p.m.

"Making Landscapes Work for Wildlife,"
presented by Adam Janke

Project GREEN British Landscapes Tour

Collette Tours, June 11-20, 2020

Open Gardens Weekend 2020

June 27 & 28

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**Downsizing or moving? Project GREEN
welcomes donations of yard and garden tools!
Contact us at: www.iowacityprojectgreen@gmail.com**