

# THE POLLINATOR



Bulletin of the GOOD EARTH GARDEN CLUB, INC. Of Cedar Rapids, Iowa

March 2012

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Friday, March 9, 7:00pm, Governors Room @ Deer Ridge, Meth-Wick 1650 Koehler Dr NW CR, IA  
 Program will be "Mushrooms"—Dick Fass - Master Gardener  
 Host & Hostess will be Katheryn and Ken Reed



## DID YOU KNOW?...

Trees can help in prevention of erosion and conserve water. Tree roots hold soil in place and increase water infiltration. Trees create organic matter on the soil surface from their leaf litter. Their roots increase soil permeability. This results in the following: Reduced surface runoff of water from storms. Reduced soil erosion and sedimentation of streams. Increased ground water recharge that is significantly reduced by paving. Lesser amounts of chemicals transported to streams. Reduced wind erosion of soil. Without trees, cities would need to increase sewage and storm water drainage channels and waste treatment capacities to handle increased water runoff.

## MUSKMELON TRANSPLANTS

Which is better—planting *seeds* of fast-growing vine crops like muskmelons directly in the garden or using *transplants*? In recent trials conducted by Scott NeSmith, Ph.D., at the University of Georgia, going the transplant route definitely gave earlier yields than direct-seeding. But what was surprising was that Dr. NeSmith found it doesn't matter whether those transplants are two *weeks* old or two *months* old! Dr. NeSmith set out two, four, six and eight week old transplants all on the same date, all the plants began producing melons about the same time *and* had the same total yields by the end of the experiment. Other recent experiments with watermelons and squash that also found the age of transplants to have no influence on yields.

Dr NeSmith says "You should definitely get earlier melons and squash if you use transplants," he predicts, "but there's no need to start your seeds more than two or three weeks before you plan to set them out."

Heat-loving cucurbits shouldn't be planted outside until two or three weeks after your last expected spring frost, so Dr. NeSmith suggest you start your transplants around your last frost date and then set them out just three weeks after that. And if the weather turns around and you have to keep the plants inside longer, they'll *still* do just fine when you put them out later, he says.

**The quickest way to double your money is to fold it and put it back in your pocket.**

## SUCCESS WITH TOMATOES

When buying young plants, look for pot-grown Tomatoes with healthy green leaves and no flower bunches. Tomato plants should be about 8" tall, and their roots should be white.

Avoid plants that have been stuck in their pots for too long. Do not buy those with yellow, thin, scraggly stems.

Tomato plants thrive when given an abundance of sun. Keep them in a warm and sheltered position, but protect them from blazing heat or gusting winds.

Enrich your plants soil with compost or well-rotted manure before planting and fertilize the plants regularly.

For easier watering, bury a milk jug upside down with the bottom cut off next to the plant. You can pour the water into the jug. This will allow water to go straight down to the roots.

There are four basic types of Tomatoes available, distinguished according to their size: Cherry, Medium, Plum, and Beefsteak. Cherry Tomatoes are small, round fruits, perfect for tossing whole into salads. Plums are rather oblong and good for sauces, while Medium and Beefsteak are quite meaty, large, and good for slicing.

Then there are two different growing habits available. Determinate which all the fruit ripen at once and the plant dies. This is good if you are canning and need them all at once. Or Indeterminate which continues to grow and ripen over the season up to frost.

## JOHN LAYTON IS LOOKING FOR:

If you are throwing away bed sheets, please throw them my way. They can be any color or pattern, fabric, can have the elastic around the edge, a tear or hole here or there. I don't care.

Also I would like to compile some gardening tips for either a program or to put in the Pollinator. If you have any or many, please pass them on to me, in writing

