



In the spring, at the end of the day, you should smell like dirt. – Margaret Atwood

Leo Tolstoy said spring is the time of plans and projects. Nowhere is that truer than at Central Gardens. In fact, we've been planning and plotting and working on projects all winter to get ready for the gates to open May 1st. Now entering our 21st year, we think 2021 will be Central Gardens' best ever. Come and experience the beauty and the bounty of the Gardens again and again this season. Come and see the progress and improvements we've made to the grounds. Come and explore new features and activities that are sure to please and delight. Come and know that we are on a mission to provide a public, intergenerational garden environment that is welcoming, beautiful, calm, educational, recreational, and fun. Welcome back to Central Gardens!

MAY DAY! MAY DAY! CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS!

Please join us for the annual May Day Call for Volunteers on Saturday, May 1, from 9 AM to 11 AM to find your place within Central Gardens. Refreshments will be served on the Victorian Terrace of the Nature Education Pavilion. You'll learn about opportunities to dig in the dirt, plant flowers, serve on a committee, help with events and programs, and so much more. We need people of all ages and abilities, of varied interests and skills, to serve Central Gardens in variety of ways. You don't have to get dirty to volunteer at the Gardens but you sure can! Come and enjoy a refreshment and visit with volunteers who can answer questions and get you plugged in. See you Saturday!

TIPS FROM THE GARDENS: BOLTING

Have you heard gardeners talk about bolting and wondered what it is? Bolting is the term used to describe a plant, usually a vegetable, when it prematurely produces seeds. We get concerned about this in early summer when there has been a hot spell. Bolting limits harvest and often negatively impacts the taste or quality of the crop.

According to urban gardener, Ron Finley, bolting is caused by increased stress on the plant from three main sources: increased day length, high soil temperatures, and root stress. Finley suggests six ways to help prevent plants from going to seed: (1) Plant bolt-resistant seeds, (2) cool the soil with a layer of mulch, (3) plant certain crops during a cooler season, (4) provide shade for cold-weather crops, (5) if using fertilizer, make sure it is the appropriate type, and (6) direct sow seeds.

Stop by the Bee Happy Discovery Garden to see some of these suggestions at work. Look for cool weather crops such as snow peas, carrots, lettuce, kale, cabbage, and bok choy to show up first. These are often planted again later in the season for a fall harvest. A shade cloth may be used in the early summer for these plants. The raised vegetable beds will have a layer of leaves used as mulch to cover the soil to prevent weed development and keep plant roots cool. Plan to visit during Fresh on Friday starting June 4th and taste what's growing in the Bee Happy Discovery Garden, purchase fresh produce, and ask questions of our awesome volunteers!

PLANT SALE & GARDENING FAIR ON MAY 22



After an Iowa winter, gardeners are ready to get their hands in the dirt! Central Gardens kicks off the planting season with its annual fundraiser, the Plant Sale and Gardening Fair, on Saturday, May 22nd from 8 AM -12 PM and you are invited!

The sale features hundreds of perennials from local gardeners who are thinning their gardens as well as plants that are dug from within Central Gardens.

Not only are there plants for sale but also the area will be filled with local vendors selling garden art and décor. Your gardens will get a great start to a beautiful showing for the rest of the season!

There are many other fun highlights of the morning as well. Iowa State University Extension will be available to answer gardening questions. You'll be able to get tips and tricks from Christen Sherwood, an experienced gardener, who will be talking tomatoes from 10 AM to 12 noon. Kids will be entertained with a make-and-take planting project. And there may even be gently used garden items for sale at affordable prices.

A special recognition goes out to Cheryl Flaucher, a passionate gardener who donates hundreds of plants for this event each year. For the last ten years, Cheryl has been a mainstay of the sale. Her hard work of digging and potting all those plants and her meticulous labeling of plant names and descriptions is appreciated beyond words. Thank you, Cheryl!

If you have plants to donate for the sale, dig them, pot them, label them and bring them to the Gardens on May 20th or 21st between 5 PM and 6 PM and be sure to mark your calendar to spend the morning at Central Gardens on May 22nd. We'll see you there!

GRANT SUPPORT for Central Gardens

As a 501 (c)(3) charitable organization, Central Gardens relies on grant funding to make it possible to beautify and maintain the grounds and to offer free admission plus over 50 free activities, events, and programs each year. If you are part of a foundation or charitable trust with a heart for gardens, or know someone who is, we'd love to hear from you. Please contact us at info@centralgardensnorthiowa.com.

In March, the John K. and Luise V. Hanson Foundation awarded Central Gardens \$3,000 to purchase tools and equipment that will make the hard work necessary to maintain and enhance the Gardens a bit easier and a lot more efficient. Also, in March, Scotts Miracle-Gro GroMoreGood Grassroots awarded the Gardens \$500 for an accessible gardening project in the Bee Happy Discovery Garden.

In April, Worth County Development Authority awarded Central Gardens \$2,100 for the purchase of a used golf cart to be used primarily by volunteers to care for the grounds. Also, in April, the Gardens received \$300 from the Clear Lake Rotary for a Bee Happy Discovery Garden station complete with magnifiers, a mason bee house, and other supplies for exploration and education. Central Gardens is grateful for the generous support of these grant-makers. Thank you!

SILVER CORD VOLUNTEERS

Three sophomores from Ankeny who are working on their Silver Cord joined a small group of volunteers on April 10 to clean up the grounds in preparation of opening day May 1. Pictured here are Luke Thompson, Adam Loos, and Luke Auderer. We appreciate them for choosing Central Gardens and we appreciate their hard work! If you have a group interested in garden work, let us know.

We'd love to get you plugged in!



REMEMBERING OUR HEROES

In the years following the Civil War, cities and towns across America began to hold springtime tributes for the fallen. They would decorate the graves and pray over them, grateful for their service, lamenting their sacrifice. It was a time to pause, reflect, and appreciate the weight of having lost over 600,000 lives in the war.

As Memorial Day approaches, we pause to remember all those who have served our military so that we may pursue life, liberty, and happiness. We'll also remember the friends and loved ones we've lost, many to a pandemic that's killed nearly 600,000 Americans. And we'll remember our heroes.

Central Gardens invites you to decorate the Gardens with memories of the heroes in your life. Do you have a military hero to honor this year? Do you know a health care provider whose work during the pandemic has been heroic? Have you had a mentor, a teacher, or a grandparent that has significantly impacted your life? Remember them with a personalized brick, paver, or a limestone cube in the Gardens this spring.

Only eleven cubes remain for the Council Ring. Donors may have an 18" limestone seating cube engraved with thirty letters for placement in the Council Ring for \$1,500. Memorial bricks may be placed in the Hero's Walk, Gardener's Walk, Wedding Walk, Faculty Walk, Alumni Walk, or on a terrace for \$250. And 16" granite pavers are available for placement in the Gardens for \$1,000.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

Your membership supports the mission of Central Gardens and our ability to open the gates, offer free admission, and provide over 50 free events each year. Please keep the momentum of what promises to be a fun-filled year going at the Gardens by establishing or renewing your membership today. All members receive this newsletter, recognition in the annual report, a window cling with Central Gardens' logo, and pride in knowing they are supporting the quality of life in north Iowa. Additional perks, including sponsorship opportunities, Summer Garden Party tickets, and Garden rentals, are available at different levels. As a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, donations to Central Gardens are tax deductible. Log on to <https://centralgardensnorthiowa.com/member.../become-a-member/> or contact us at info@centralgardensnorthiowa.com for more information.

CENTRAL GARDENS CORPORATE MEMBERS

Clear Lake Bank and Trust,
CL Tel,
ControlPrint Creative,
Don's Body Shop,
Farmers State Bank,
Gabrielson Agency,
Hansmeier Mowing,
Hearing Associates,
Images Photography,

Lake Liquors,
Larson's Mercantile,
McQuaid Agency,
Metalcraft,
Pla-Ground Family Farms,
Sail Inn,
The Basic Birder, and
Yohnco Concrete & Construction





Central Gardens of North Iowa
P.O. Box 735
Clear Lake, IA 50428

Address Service Requested

PSRT STD
US Postage
PAID
Permit No. 7
Mason City, IA

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES, PROGRAMS & EVENTS

Central Gardens is excited to offer several new activities and events this season, as well as long-time favorites such as Fresh on Friday, Picnics and Performances, and the Garden Fiesta, all free of charge. Over the winter, Mark Dorenbush built the cornhole boards shown below and Sally Rasmussen painted them with vibrant garden scenes. Cornhole is available for checkout at the School Bell Gazebo. Come and play at Central Gardens!

Saturday, May 1 – Friday, October 31, 2021 Gates open daily from dawn to dusk

Saturday, May 1, 9 AM – 11 AM May Day Call for Volunteers

Saturday, May 15 and Sunday, May 16, 2 PM -3:30 PM Learn to Play Golf Croquet

Saturday, May 22, 8 AM – 12 PM Gardening Fair and Plant Sale



And for a sneak peek at June ... Fresh on Friday and Garden Explorers begin on Friday, June 4th. Golf croquet open play starts Sunday the 13th. The Gardener Lecture Series begins on June 15th with a program titled Getting to Know Our Backyard Habitat. There will be a Strawberry Moon Drum Circle on the 25th followed by a spectacular Summer Garden Party on Saturday, June 26th. The lecture series continues on the 29th with a program by Jan Libbey about Toads and Frogs.

For information on these and other events and activities at Central Gardens, follow us on Facebook or visit our website at <https://www.centralgardensnorthiowa.com>.