

August 2022



What's Growing On!

at Central Gardens of North Iowa

Look deep into nature and then you will understand everything better. – Albert Einstein

GETTING DOWN & DIRTY IN Central Gardens

If the heart of a volunteer can be measured by the depth of their commitment to serve others, then the hearts of a core group of individuals who volunteer at Central Gardens are among the biggest. That core group, known as the Down & Dirty crew, emerged early on to do the heavy-lifting necessary to develop and maintain an ever-changing, ever-evolving, public garden.

The origins of Down & Dirty can be traced to Roger Harringa, a self-proclaimed garden grunt, who drafted the bulk of the crew that exists today. He was still in business as a contractor when he got involved with the Gardens 22 years ago. Harringa had the equipment Central Gardens needed to do the original plantings and he had a passion for landscaping and so he, along with former board member, Barb Nicholas, began to get the work organized.

They launched Down & Dirty, designating one evening a week as a time when many people could come together to accomplish bigger projects. These projects can be as hard as hard work can be. "A good physical workout," as Connie Plagge puts it, "as minimal or strenuous" as you wish. The Down & Dirty crew tackle some of the toughest jobs in Central Gardens: clearing brush, pulling stumps, digging decades old mulch, planting trees, repairing pipes and fountains, and so much more.

Jody and Connie Plagge were first introduced to Central Gardens in 2011 when their son married here. A second son married in the Gardens in 2013, the year Jody and Connie moved to Clear Lake. Harringa introduced them to others who worked in the Gardens and the Plagge's have been devoted volunteers ever since. "It was a good way to meet people," said Connie, who has experienced deep personal gratification not only from seeing the results of her work, but also in knowing that Central Gardens is enjoyed by thousands of people every year.

Harringa asked Roger Walston to help him with some projects in the Gardens while fishing together just over 10 years ago. Walston continued to help out, pitching in whenever Harringa asked him too. He has continued to work the bigger projects in the Gardens while his wife, Lee, tends to the Arrival Garden, one of over 20 themed gardens on the grounds.

Jim Butler says it is the friends he's made that keep him coming back, the camaraderie among the crew. Mark and Becke Dorenbush enjoy going to Down & Dirty as a couple, working together with others, and seeing the results of their collective efforts in the beauty of the Gardens.

When the work is done, they socialize. Walston, a home winemaker, started bringing a couple of bottles of wine with him to share. Others bring snacks, and the group uses the last 30 minutes or so of each work session to rest and get to know each other. Walston said, "The social time after the work allowed us to get to know some great people that we now consider some of our best friends."

Today, the evening Down & Dirty crew is comprised of about fifteen people: *Dave Hoistad, Jim Butler, David and Jeannie Burgart, Merle and Julie Tiedemann, Jody and Connie Plagge, Mark and Becke Dorenbush, Roger and Lee Walston, Doug and Laura Marty, and Roy Markwardt.* The splendor and the beauty of Central Gardens would not be possible without this fine crew. Thank you!

Join our Down & Dirty crews! Down & Dirty convenes each Tuesday, 6 PM – 8 PM and Wednesday, 8 AM – 10 AM. Simply stop by and dig in! There are always lengthy job lists to tackle and more help is urgently needed. For more information about volunteering at Central Gardens, please contact us at info@centralgardensnorthiowa.com or at 641-357-0700.



SECOND ANNUAL PLEIN AIR EVENT

Join fellow Midwest artists for a fun day of painting in the diverse beauty of Clear Lake, Iowa! Clear Lake Arts Center and Central Gardens of North Iowa invite artists who work in oil, watercolor, acrylic, pastel, charcoal, or other mediums to come to the Gardens and Clear Lake on Saturday, August 20th to paint en plein air! Artists will meet at the Gardens and may choose to set up and paint here or in downtown Clear Lake. Spectators are welcome!

An exhibition will follow at the Clear Lake Arts Center where the finished pieces can be viewed or purchased. A rain date is set for Sunday, August 21. Images Photography will have photos of Central Gardens and other natural settings available for sale in the Garden's Nature Education Pavilion.



CENTRAL GARDENS HOSTS SENIOR SOCIAL

Senior Social is a time set aside for seniors living independently, in assisted living, or in other retirement facilities to come experience Central Gardens and enjoy some coffee, friendship, and refreshments on the patio. In July, 22 people attended the event. Humana provided coffee. Elderbridge Agency on Aging, a nonprofit organization in Mason City, led a short Tai Chi session. Healthy

Harvest of North Iowa provided samples of yogurt parfait and answered questions related to food and nutrition.

Senior Social meets again on Wednesday, August 10, 10 – 11 AM. Healthy Harvest will be back demonstrating how to build a nutritious, simple salad. Samples will be given out. Elderbridge and Humana will also be participating and attendees will learn about some of the flowers blooming in the Gardens.



AVANGRID RENEWABLES FUNDS

Picnics and Performances

Avangrid Renewables has provided funding for Picnics and Performances again this year, making it possible to provide a modest honorarium to performers. The eight-part series began July 17 and has been attended by nearly 300 people so far. Thank you, Avangrid Renewables! We appreciate your support!



Shakespeare IN THE GARDENS

Don't thou miss it! The Iowa Shakespeare Experience (ISE) will present its innovative short play "Romeo and Juliet: The Comedy" at Picnics and Performances on Sunday, August 21, starting promptly at 5 PM! The event is free and open to the public. All are welcome and encouraged to attend!

In 2016, the play listed in 5th place internationally in one of the largest Shakespeare adaptation contests ever held in England by Cambridge University Press, one of the world's oldest publishing companies.

The Iowa Shakespeare Experience is central Iowa's premier Shakespeare company, bringing Shakespeare to communities across the state. ISE promises all the Shakespeare you remember so freshly told you'll never forget.

Picnics and Performances is held each Sunday through September 4 and features local and regional musicians, magicians, and other entertainers. Showtime is 5 PM – 6 PM. Admission is free. Donations are welcome.



FARM TO TABLE *Harvest Dinner*



Just 32 tickets are available for Central Gardens farm-to-table harvest dinner on **Sunday, September 11, from 5 PM to 7 PM!** Join us for a magnificent six-course meal prepared by Dan Murphy with food from local producers and a signature drink. A vegan option is available upon request. Simply note your preference when ordering your tickets.

The event will feature live music by local artists, Juni and Betty, and promises a delicious meal and a relaxing evening in the beauty of the Gardens. In case of inclement weather, the event will be held in the Nature Education Pavilion.

Tickets are just \$75 and all proceeds will benefit Central Gardens. Order your tickets today via email at info@centralgardensnorthiowa.com or at 641-357-0700. Hurry! We expect to sell out quickly!

UPCOMING EVENTS AT CENTRAL GARDENS

TUESDAYS, AUGUST 2, 9, 16, 23, & 30, 9:30 AM – 10:30 AM

Line Dancing with Mary Jo (Free)

THURSDAYS, AUGUST 4, 11, 18, & 25, 10 AM

Golf Croquet Open Play (Free)

FRIDAYS, AUGUST 5, 12, 19, & 26, 9 AM – 11 AM

Fresh on Friday Bouquet Sales and Refreshments

FRIDAYS, AUGUST 5, 12, 19, & 26, 9 AM – 11 AM

Garden Explorers for kids (Free)

SUNDAY, AUGUST 7, 5 PM – 6 PM

Picnics & Performances - Levi Smith & Brent Estlund (Free)

MONDAYS, AUGUST 8, 15, 22, & 29, 10 AM

Golf Croquet Open Play (Free)

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 10, 10 AM – 11 AM

Senior Social (Free)

FRIDAY, AUGUST 12, 10:30 AM – 11 AM

Yoga Buds, ages 4 and up (Free)

SUNDAY, AUGUST 14, 5 PM – 6 PM

Picnics & Performances - Come Back Buddy (Free)

THURSDAY, AUGUST 18, 5:30 PM - 7 PM

Pop-up Italian Cooking Class (for youth 10 years and up-an adult may accompany but is not required). Free, but registration is limited and required.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 20 8 AM – 5 PM

Artist Paint Out (Rain date August 21)

SUNDAY, AUGUST 21, 5 PM - 6 PM PICNICS &

Performances - Iowa Shakespeare Experience (Free)

FRIDAY, AUGUST 26, 6 PM -8:30 PM

Botanical Mixology with herbalist, Christen Sherwood (Ticketed event)

SUNDAY, AUGUST 28, 5 PM - 6 PM

Picnics & Performances - Jim & Dave (Free)

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 5:30 PM -7 PM

Pop-up Italian Cooking Class (for youth 10 years and up-an adult may accompany but is not required). Free, but registration is limited and required.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 5 PM - 6 PM

Picnics & Performances - Matt Woods (Free)

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 2 PM - 4 PM

Preservation Celebration (Free)

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, 5 PM – 7 PM

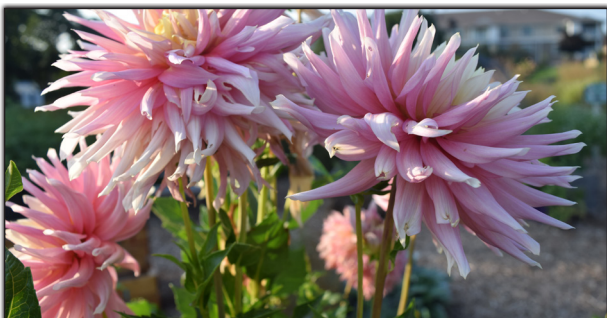
Farm-to-Table Harvest Dinner (Ticketed event)

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 3 PM

Bell ringing in Central Gardens for Constitution Day (Free)

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2 PM – 5 PM

Garden Fiesta (Free)



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Central Gardens of North Iowa
P.O. Box 735
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Thank you!