



I can smell autumn dancing in the breeze. The sweet chill of pumpkin, and crisp sunburnt leaves. – Ann Drake

PUMPKIN PALOOZA TO CELEBRATE ALL THINGS PUMPKIN

Searching for a family-friendly, fun, and FREE event this fall? Search no more! Central Gardens, in collaboration with the Clear Lake Arts Center and the Clear Lake Public Library, will host a first-ever Pumpkin Palooza on **Saturday, October 15, from 4 PM - 7 PM** (Rain date: Sunday, October 16). It's a celebration of all things pumpkin, one of the more resilient fruits. A pumpkin will find a way to grow large and bulging amongst sparse soil, sharing nutrients along a connected vine that reaches into the ground to replenish itself. It is perhaps the reason pumpkins have become symbols of prosperity, growth, and abundance.

Palooza activities include pumpkin painting, pumpkin games, art activities, a pumpkin-themed story walk, pumpkin guessing contests, and a drawing for prizes. Watch demonstrations about how to use pumpkins for flowers arrangements and learn about drilling pumpkins as an alternative to carving. There will be a beautiful, fall-themed photo booth, a perfect spot to take your family's Christmas card photos. And, local chefs will provide tips (and samples!) for cooking and baking with pumpkins. We'll also have apple cider and popcorn for everyone.



Then, from 6 PM to 7 PM, everyone is invited to view a lighted "Pumpkins on Parade" that will take place on the bridges and walkways in the Gardens. All individuals, businesses, and organizations that would like to display a carved pumpkin for the parade are invited to do so. We'll even supply the pumpkins! Follow us on Facebook for a schedule of events, frequently asked questions about joining the pumpkin parade, and further detail about this fun, festive, family-friendly, and FREE event.

CENTRAL GARDENS VOLUNTEERS RECEIVE LEGACY AWARD



Gary and Sandy Nyhus, who were presented with the Legacy Award by the Iowa High School Baseball Coaches Association (IHSBCA) at the All-Star series in August. Gary and Sandy have worked for the series for over 35 years and the IHSBCA annual clinic for 40 years. Gary and Sandy are also devoted volunteers at Central Gardens. Gary serves on Central Gardens board of directors and finance committee while Sandy helps out in the Bee Happy Discovery Garden. The pair also have also adopted a wide area of the Gardens, starting at the main entrance and extending to the fountain. Congratulations, Gary and Sandy!

CENTRAL GARDENS: *A Garden Oasis*

The following is part 2 of an article written by Lori Berglund, a freelance writer with Big Green Umbrella Media, for Clear Lake Living, published in 2012. Part 1 was presented in the September newsletter. The full article can be read here www.centralgardensnorthiowa.com/garden-oasis

Donna Dull, one of Central Gardens most ardent volunteers and benefactors, knows the stories of the 22 gardens very well. One of them is her "mother's garden."

"I was not a gardener. It was my mother and grandfather that were gardeners," she says. *"But I have found that for me, it's one of the best places to talk to God."* Dull honored her mother's love for gardens with a plaque in the garden that reads, *"In search of my mother's garden, I found my own."*

But Dull has created a legacy also designed to help Central Gardens grow into the future. The MEWS Building (Mother Earth's Workshop) was built in 2011 and will be completed this year with the addition of a small greenhouse.

Dull sees the MEWS Building as one of the more practical gifts to the garden, creating storage and workspace that was desperately needed. In addition, it {has} public bathrooms and a drinking fountain that had not previously been available.

"I was glad to be able to give back to all the people who have given to me," Dull says. *"I feel like I got a lot from the City of Clear Lake, and now I'm giving back."*

Perhaps it's fitting that this former school site is benefiting from the generosity of one of the city's longest-serving teachers. Dull spent 41 teaching kindergartners, 39 of them at the former Lincoln School in Clear Lake. She's looking forward to reading to kids at the Gardens later this summer.

"That's probably what I miss the most. I love to read stories to boys and girls," she says.

And she also loves to look around and see the joy that Central Gardens gives to its visitors. On an early summer day, a family from Cedar Rapids, vacationing in Clear Lake, was letting the kids run and burn off some energy at the Gardens. They make a point to visit the Gardens each year when in Clear Lake.

"We've really enjoyed watching it grow over the years," says Sarah Evanschwartz, as children Noah and Chavah smell the flowers and watch a few butterflies float by.

"The kids really enjoy it," she says.

As the kids run and play, nearby volunteers pull a few stubborn weeds, prune the vegetation and water some of the new plantings.

Sharon Taylor has lived in Clear Lake for seven years and has been coming to volunteer at the Gardens most of that time.

"I like being outside, and it's warm, and you get to work with lots of different plant material and meet lots of people when you come here," she says.

Pulling weeds isn't supposed to be fun, but for volunteers it seems to be a relaxing way to spend the morning.

Back at the table with Sorenson and Moran, Alice Blomstrom is a veteran volunteer looking for new ways to help after some arthritic joints have convinced her to slow down a bit.



"I had been helping with the weeding, but I can't do that anymore, so I will find my niche here," she says.

"I came to purchase a couple bouquets of flowers and just to enjoy the peace and quiet and beauty of the Gardens," she adds. *"It's a wonderful attraction for Clear Lake."*

Sorenson agrees.

"It's kind of calming and stress relieving to come here," she says.

New volunteers as well as benefactors are always welcome and needed. To learn about how to help, visit [www.centralgardensnorthiowa.com] or call 641-357-0700. As a privately-funded, free, public garden, assistance is always needed and very much appreciated.

To Dull, and all the volunteers like her, there's no doubt that every drop of sweat is well worth the effort.

Let your mind wander back again to those stories of the old Central School, which served originally as both the junior high and high school. Think of the first dates, the couples who became life-long sweethearts.

How fitting that the grandchildren and great grandchildren of these couples can still share this special place. They can come here and learn, as did those previous generations. And they can come here and fall in love at Central Gardens.



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Central Gardens of North Iowa
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Clear Lake, IA 50428

Address Service Requested

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT CENTRAL GARDENS

The season is winding down, and Pumpkin Palooza marks the last event of the season. We hope you'll visit the Gardens at least once more before the gates close on October 31! Follow us on Facebook or visit our website for details about events and other activities coming up at Central Gardens in 2023.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 15, 4 PM – 7 PM *Pumpkin Palooza (Free)*

MONDAY, OCTOBER 31, *dusk Gates close for the season*

MONDAY, MAY 1, 2023 *Gates open at dawn for the 2023 season*

SATURDAY, MAY 20, 8 AM - 12 PM *Plant Sale and Gardening Fair*

FRIDAYS, JUNE 2 – AUGUST 25, 9 AM – 11 AM *Garden Explorers (Free)*

FRIDAYS, JUNE 2 – SEPTEMBER 1, 9 AM – 11 AM *Fresh on Friday Bouquet*

Sales and Refreshments

SUNDAY, JUNE 25, 1 PM *Summer Garden Party (Ticketed event)*

SUNDAYS, JULY 23 - SEPTEMBER 10, 5 PM – 6 PM *Picnics & Performances (Free)*

