



Watching something grow is good for morale. It helps us believe in life. —Myron Kaufmann

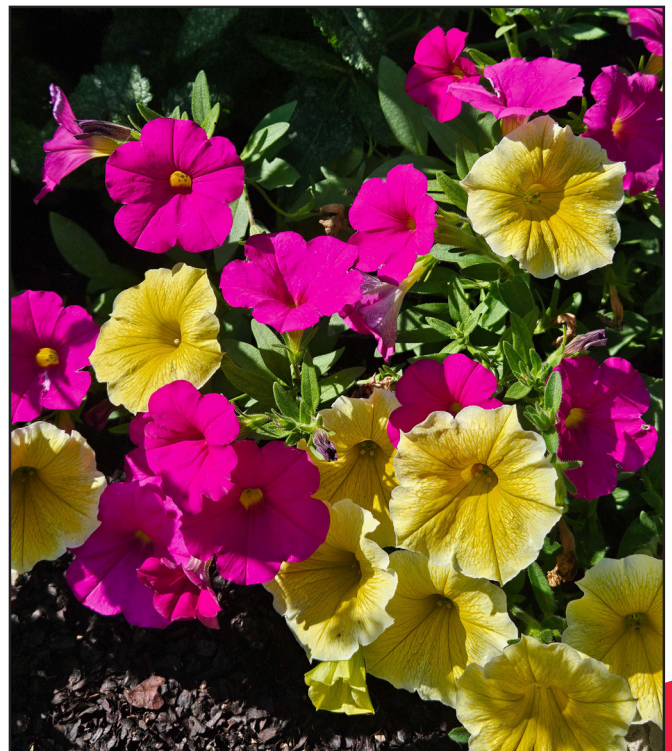
CENTRAL GARDENS DISPLAYS **ALL-AMERICA** SELECTION WINNERS

Need new ideas for well performing flowers and tasty vegetables to grow in your garden? Come to Central Gardens and look for plants labeled with blue, white and red "All-America Selections" (AAS) signs in the Plant of the Year Garden and Bee Happy Discovery Garden.

Nearly two dozen AAS winners are on display in Central Gardens this summer. During Fresh on Fridays, visitors can taste and purchase AAS winning eggplants, lettuce, squash and several varieties of tomatoes and peppers grown by the young gardeners. See this year's award-winning annuals and perennials (and a few past winners) in the Plant of the Year Garden, including Solarscape Impatiens Pink Jewel that performs well in full sun, Pink Batik Geranium with unique coloration, Colocasia Royal Hawaiian Waikiki for a tropical vibe, and striking red Celosia Burning Embers, among others.

Since 2023, Central Gardens has been a display garden for the All-America Selections organization, the oldest independent testing organization of flowers and edibles in North America. AAS is a non-profit organization that conducts trials of new, never before sold annual ornamentals, perennials and vegetables throughout North America. AAS judges look for significantly improved qualities such as earliness to bloom or harvest; disease or pest tolerance; novel colors, flavors, or flower forms; total yield; length of flowering or harvest; and overall performance. Iowa State University is an AAS trial ground where potential plant selections are planted, observed, and evaluated for garden performance.

Early in the planting year, Central Gardens receives a box of seeds, followed by growing plant plugs in April. The seeds and baby plants, worth hundreds of dollars, are free to Central Gardens. In return, volunteers plant and care for them, install AAS signs providing information about each variety, and introduce the winners to home gardeners. AAS provides information about Central Gardens of North Iowa on its website, helping to promote Central Gardens nationally. Central Gardens is one of 9 AAS display gardens in Iowa and nearly 200 in North America. Go to www.aaswinners.com for more information about the organization and previous winners.



Gardeners of Tomorrow IN CENTRAL GARDENS



Gardeners of Tomorrow is a free gardening, learning, and service program for youth entering grades 6-12 that began in 2020 with a handful of students. Now in its 5th year, the

program has the largest group yet with 21 youth from Clear Lake and Mason City.

Students can earn silver cord hours and are welcome to participate as often as they are able. The program provides a flexible schedule for youth to learn about organic gardening, healthy food, recipes, flower arranging, and community service. The program runs from mid-June to mid-August and is led by several adult volunteers from Central Gardens including Leigh Trembath, Laura Marty, Cindy Peterson, and Kayla Myers along with Marie Morud from Healthy Harvest of North Iowa.

These youth help out with Garden Explorers during Fresh on Fridays, prepare tastings from the garden, harvest and sell

produce, interact with the public, and make bouquets. On Wednesdays they-work in the Bee Happy Discovery Garden to pick and prepare produce for the Clear Lake/Ventura Food Pantry. Last year 278 pounds of fresh produce was donated to the food pantry!

According to Kidsgardening.org, "Youth gardens bring people together, creating the human connection necessary to help calm anxieties and promote hopefulness. Humans have a strong instinct to belong to small groups with a common purpose, and gardening is a safe way to gather and connect." They go on to say, "Gardening in a group also boosts their sense of self-efficacy – their belief in themselves as agents of change – as well as their sense of meaning and purpose." With this program, Central Gardens strives to offer youth opportunities to develop responsibility, connect to other living things and the earth, improve problem-solving skills, learn about food insecurity, appreciate pollinators, the cycle of life, and the past, present and future.

HERB GARDEN OVERHAUL

You may be wondering what's happening with Central Gardens' Herb Garden, located just north of the Bee Happy Discovery Garden along the southern edge of the Ceremonial Lawn. For years, the Herb Garden has not flourished. Even during times of drought, the garden is always soaking wet, killing the plants. Various remedies have been employed through the years without success. So, the Design Committee determined the need to completely overhaul the garden, digging deeper than ever before.

In June, David Burgart, who, with his wife Jeanne, adopted the Herb Garden in 2021, led the effort to identify why the garden got so saturated. Along with David, the team working on the overhaul included Ron Eldridge, Merle Tiedemann, Dave Holsted, Trent Tiedemann, and Alex Tiedemann.

The team removed all of the old soil, which contained a significant amount of crushed rock. They dug down 17 inches, then sank post holes four more feet, to create drainage opportunities in the garden. Mother nature was kind enough to provide plenty of opportunities to test the drainage of the garden. However, each modification reinforced the reality that water was simply not soaking through the ground in that garden. With one particularly heavy rain, the team allowed the water to remain in the garden for three days, with virtually no water soaking away.

They determined that the only viable solution was to place tile around the outside of the garden, add a new exit tile through the prairie grass, and connect it to an existing tile. Rains in early July suggest that this solution is promising. The team will cover the new tile with several inches of gravel, replace the topsoil in the garden, and move the herbs back in place. Many thanks to the team for a huge and very muddy effort! We are hopeful the Herb Garden will be thriving soon thanks to you!



The Lily Garden

The Lily

*The modest Rose puts forth a thorn,
The humble sheep threat'ning horn:*

*While the Lily white shall in love delight,
Nor a thorn nor a threat stain her beauty bright.*

William Blake

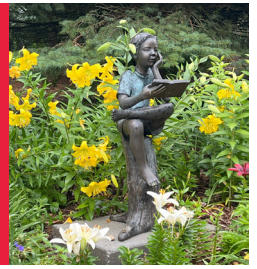
The Lily Garden is one of the oldest among 23 themed gardens within Central Gardens and is located just inside the northwest entrance to the grounds, along the Friendship Walk. The garden was refreshed last fall with more than 1200 lily bulbs that have created a beautiful spectacle this summer.

Down & Dirty volunteers leveled the garden and planted the bulbs as designed by Laura Marty. Sherri Eddy and Ellen Sturgis then adopted the Lily Garden and have cared for its every need. The results have been stunning.

Volunteers are still needed for Down & Dirty, garden adoptions, coordinating rentals, social media, committee work, and more. Even an hour a week makes a huge difference in Central Gardens! Learn more about volunteering on our website.



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

Address Service Requested

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS AT CENTRAL GARDENS

Follow us on Facebook or visit our website at www.centralgardensnorthiowa.com for information on activities, events, and programs at the Gardens. Gates open daily from dawn to dusk through October 31. Admission is free. Donations are welcome.

FRIDAYS, AUGUST 2, 9, 16, 23, AND 30, 9 AM – 11 AM

Garden Explorers (kids). Free.

FRIDAYS, AUGUST 2, 9, 16, 23, AND 30, 9 AM – 11 AM

Fresh on Friday Bouquet Sales and Refreshments.

SUNDAYS, AUGUST 4, 11, 18, AND 25, 5 PM – 6 PM

Picnics & Performances. Free.

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 2 PM – 4 PM

Bugs, Bees, and Butterflies. Free.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12, 4 PM – 7 PM

Pumpkin Palooza. Free.

