

GARDENING: A HEALTHY FAMILY ACTIVITY

Gardening is going to be more important than ever this year, though the Marais des Cygnes Extension Master Gardeners annual Plant Sale in Paola has been cancelled.

As we all try to keep our distance from each other—and as normal activities are suspended—gardening in our own yards becomes more than ever a healthy way to enjoy nature, do something fun with the kids, breathe fresh air, and grow our family's own vegetables.

Paola-area EMGs are always on a mission to educate the public about the need to save the butterflies and bees—the pollinators so vital for much of the planet's food supply. Local butterfly expert Lenora Larson is encouraging gardeners to support our Paola Plant Sale vendors by shopping at their retail locations.

Vinland Valley Nursery in Baldwin supplies butterfly host plants to the plant sale every year, in addition to other bee-friendly natives and perennials.

Louisburg Nursery provides annuals, planters and hanging baskets for the sale, and Boston Berry Farm in Garden City, MO, sells edible woody perennials and creative succulent planters. All three nurseries are small, family-run businesses that would appreciate everyone's support. Google them for more information.

MdC Master Gardeners design, plant and maintain the display gardens at the historic Paola Courthouse, as well as gardens at the K-State Extension Office and a vegetable trial garden that also functions as a source of produce for under-served communities in the county.

Classes on various horticultural topics are regularly held at the Extension Office (postponed for now). In normal times the public is welcome to attend and learn. Watch for calendar listings in local publications, or check the schedule at www.maraisdescyignes.ksu.edu.

For more information about how to become an EMG, contact the Extension Office at 913-294-4306 or www.maraisdescyignes.ksu.edu. For now the Extension Office is closed to the public, but staff are available via email. Follow the EMGs on Facebook at www.facebook.com/mdcemg.