



The 1st Annual Garden Tour of Ferry County

was a great success! It was held on Saturday, July 16, 2011 presented by the Ferry County Extension Office Master Gardener, Ann Miller, leading the tour, and Dan Fagerlie, County Extension Agent, offering his expertise. The event was well attended with 20+ guest visiting six different garden sites throughout the county. Gathering early in the morning, at the parking lot, behind the Ferry County Courthouse, each guest was presented with a brochure/map of the various gardens we were to attend, a name tag, and a corsage/boutonniere.

Beginning the tour at the Anderson's, visiting "In Memory of Judy" garden, as Mrs. Anderson recently passed away, we were honoring her wish to be on the garden tour. The beautiful gardens was an inspiration by it's diversity and beauty. Many comments of "how beautiful", "she must have loved animals", and my favorite, "what a way to be remembered" echoed in the air as we walked amongst her flowers. We thank John Anderson for sharing his wife's garden with us and it was a lovely memory to begin our garden tour.

Next we visited "The Maple Tree", hosted by Kate Meginley, and everyone was impressed with her exquisite garden worked into a small space. Clever faux-screened windows, displaying colorful flowered-window boxes upon the fencing, metal advertising signs hanging upon a side wall of the garden, and the uniquely decorated potting shed brought your eye through her garden as we soaked up the beauty and her delightful choices of plant life. Sharing an ice drink with everyone, she answered questions about her garden and brought out clippers for anyone to take cuttings home.

Our trip took us just west of Republic, to "Mountain Song Garden's". Suzie Sage explained many problems she has overcome working in a very low temperate region of our county, that she fondly calls "Siberia". She's endured through a host of difficulties, but her various vegetable gardens, as well as her flowers and trees, displays her success facing so many challenges. Lots of questions as the garden visitors were feverishly writing down their notes, (we also held: "person with the most notes would win a prize at the end of the day" contest), concluded with everyone enjoying their sack lunch upon the well-manicured lawn, as the birds sang and the sun shone overhead.

Gathering our belongings, we headed up towards Malo, where we visited the James's "A Thyme for Peace" garden. Cherise and David, who live at a high elevation, brought the tour through their greenhouse, where we heard a comment of "those are Tomato Trees!" with much fruit bearing upon the many varieties. Many selections of peppers were growing and the James's explained their greenhouse system and growing methods. As the tour moved through the outdoors vegetable and herb garden, thundershowers came crashing down as we all made a mad run for the indoors. What's a little thunderstorm in Ferry County? Dripping wet in their kitchen, we were served lemonade and a warm-baked dish that help take the chill off. Soon we were a bit drier and it was time to head to our next garden site.

Meeting at "The Wren Patch", north of Curlew, what is infamously known as the banana belt region, the sun shined again as Twinflower Wilkie guided us through her blooming and fruiting gardens. She made a comment concerning the drive to work everyday to Republic from her home was 60+ miles. She felt it was worth the drive. It showed in her love of gardening, and the amazing timing of her fruiting season. We were surprised her raspberries were so close to picking. Littlewolf, gathered amass amount of strawberries, that he hulled and rinsed, passing the colanders around for us to enjoy as we settle into chairs. They were wonderfully sweet and we noticed there were many more on the vines to be picked. A subject we discussed included identifying a true berry vs. an inferior berry enlightening the garden tour visitors strawberries are an inferior berry. I don't think they were really convinced.

It was time to move to our last garden of the day, "Waters of the Jordan's", hosted by Tonia and Keith Jordan. Living next to Trout Creek, they showed many aspect of their gardening techniques, taking advantage of the creek to produce a lovely water feature, with inviting seating areas to enjoy a quiet moment or curl up with a good book. Roses, fruiting plants, including apples and strawberries with an abundance of flowers surrounded us as we enjoyed a delightful dish of cheese, meat and a variety of other choice foods to refresh our spirits. Sipping on a cup of ice peach tea, we collected the notes of all our garden visitors, counting up the numbers. Judi Crippy won her prize with 82 notes of information and she picked an interesting book on Heirloom plants. The lowest number of one (1), by Jan Hartford was given the Sunset book of garden plants, we teased her that she really must need the book.

It was time for us to go home, but for those still lingering for more, we concluded at the Hummingbird Nursery, where Liz Parker welcomed us and she discussed greenhouse gardening. The wrap-up comments included, "so enjoyed themselves", "how relaxed they feel", "would love to do it again," inspired me to begin working on 2012's Garden Tour. Hope you don't miss it and we will be as successful as this one! ~ *Ann Miller - Ferry County Extension Master Gardener* @>-----,-----