

# Waveland Park News

SPRING 2023 | DES MOINES, IOWA



## It's Co-Op Season!

BY JEANNE AMBROSE



ERDA ESTREMER ON UNSPLASH

Springtime at the Iowa Food Co-op (IFC) in Waveland Park means it's the season for fresh greens and other early vegetables. You're likely to find all kinds of kale, including curly and red kale, spinach, salad greens, onions, and snow peas, among other produce brought in by rural farmers.

But that's not all.

In addition to farm-fresh produce, the IFC carries meat, dairy products, locally made baked goods, jams, and prepared dishes, says Inger Lamb, IFC board member. Farmers also offer vegetable starters, herbs, and garden plants. And don't forget the ice cream.

The Iowa Food Co-op coordinates a year-round farmer's market-style system that gives local growers a place to sell their produce and food products. It's open to members and non-members and offers online ordering, local delivery, plus a walk-in store on Franklin Avenue,

**CONTINUED ►**

## PLAN FOR COVER CROPS

Feed your soil and beat weeds naturally.

BY ANN HINGA KLEIN

I greet every gardening season with bushels of ambition. But when summer's weeds launch their takeover and Iowa's sticky heat settles in, I'm ready to throw in the trowel. Last summer, inspired by the agricultural trend of cover cropping, I decided to delegate weed management to a self-reliant crop that would also build soil health in my vegetable garden.

Cover cropping can benefit any garden, says horticulture educator Chris Enroth with Illinois Extension. In addition to crowding out weeds, it puts down roots that feed the soil's community of living organisms—including fungi, bacteria, earthworms and microscopic

animals—that provide nutrients to future plantings.

A cover crop's roots and organic materials also loosen compacted soil and produce binding agents that help soil respond well to water, filtering it down to roots and holding some of it there for later rather than pooling it on the surface or shedding it elsewhere, taking soil with it.

Restoring soil health is vital in gardens you've tilled repeatedly, which can inadvertently compact the deeper layers and disrupt the healthy, functioning environment of plants, soil and microorganisms (aka the microbiome) near the surface.

Instead of harvesting a cover crop, you'll choose the right time to terminate its growth. Depending on the plant family, the natural mulch that remains can also serve as a slow-release fertilizer.

Get started with cover cropping

### STEP 1: PICK YOUR SEASON

You can plant a cover crop almost any time in our growing season. A crop planted

**CONTINUED ►**





**THE IOWA FOOD CO-OP**  
 4944 Franklin Ave., Suite G  
 Tuesday & Friday, 4 pm–6 pm  
 Saturday, 10 am–1 pm  
 EBT accepted.



## It's Co-Op Season CONTINUED

just east of the Franklin Library. “Two common hurdles for small rural farmers are the challenges of getting products to market, and finding time to attend farmer’s markets,” Inger says. “The IFC helps overcome these issues by connecting producers directly to buyers via our online ordering system and storefront.” In addition to rural farmers, there are about 25 families from Bhutan, Burma, Burundi, and Rwanda who farm at Lutheran Services in Iowa Global Greens Farm in West Des Moines. Not only does the IFC help farmers, it also supports local bakers and cooks—and cheesemakers—who have wonderful quality products to sell, she says. You’ll find Iowa-made cheeses, yogurt, and ice cream from places like

Frisian Farms, known for its gouda; Milton Creamery and its prize-winning Prairie Breeze Cheese; WW Homestead Dairy’s cheese curds, including Jalapeno Ranch curds and Bloody Mary cheddar curds; and Country View Dairy’s frozen yogurt. “We also help give a leg up to wonderful bakers and cooks,” Inger says. “We carry sourdough breads and take-and-bake rolls. We have prepared vegan and vegetarian dishes from Nourished and wonderful savory hand pies from Domestic Bones.” A glance at IFC’s website, [iowafood.coop](http://iowafood.coop), lists a diversity of products, including heritage pork, poultry, honey and beeswax candles, kimchi and sauerkraut, salsas, tortillas, tofu, mushrooms, and microgreens. (Members can make online purchases, but

anyone, even non-members, can shop at the store on Franklin Avenue.) Looking for organic, gluten-free, grass-fed, vegetarian products? Check out the website for those details. It also includes information about where the food and other products come from, and profiles of the farmers, producers, bakers, and more. If consumers have questions they can contact the producer directly or simply ask IFC staff, Inger says. “The Iowa Food Coop bottom line,” says Inger, “is we deliver high quality, locally produced food to consumers who are not only interested in good fresh local food, but are also enthused about supporting small local farms and helping diversify Iowa’s agriculture. In the end we are helping Iowans produce healthy food for other Iowans, sustainably.”

## COVER CROPS CONTINUED

in spring will do its magic and give you a break from gardening in the hottest part of summer. A late summer or fall cover crop will take up nutrients that would otherwise leach off underground with rain and snowmelt. Some, like winter rye, *opposite*, will go dormant after the weather here turns very cold and resume their growth in early spring. Others, like oats, field peas, and annual rye, will die off but hold soil in place when the cold winds blow and serve as mulch for spring plantings.

### STEP 2: CHOOSE YOUR COVER CROP

Garden centers have begun to carry seeds for home cover crops. I found small packets at Earl May and 5-pound bags at Des Moines Feed and Nature Center at 2019 Hubbell (near the big cow), which offers quantities as small as 1 pound and as large as 50. Staff there helped me choose the best options and amounts for my space. If you’d rather learn

and shop from your couch, check your favorite seed catalog or website. Many offer cover crop options and provide detailed descriptions of their benefits and growing habits. I started with buckwheat, *below*, which flowers when fewer other plants are pollinating in our area and releases phosphorus to energize garden plantings.

### STEP 3: PLANT YOUR COVER CROP

Planting most cover crops is a simple matter of scratching the soil with a garden rake or broad fork and broadcasting the seeds by hand. Water newly planted seeds with a light mist to avoid moving them around on the soil surface, which can leave bare spots. I sowed my buckwheat in mid-May, just before our spring snap peas began to die back. Because our garden is beside the house and I wasn’t sure how a cover crop would look from the street, I planted four rows of Queen Lime zinnia seeds across the front of the bed. As an exercise



ANN’S GARDEN ON 7/21: TAMPED DOWN BUCKWHEAT



# EASTER EGG HUNT

Saturday, April 1 • 10:00 am  
Perkins Elementary School  
4301 College Ave.

The Easter Bunny will be on hand to kick off the hunt for thousands of eggs scattered around the Perkins playground. Bring your kids, your friends, and your camera!

## DETAILS

The hunt begins right at 10, so plan to arrive a few minutes early. We'll have separate areas for little, middle, and big kids. Please "recycle" eggs in one of boxes after the hunt. (We'll use them again!)



in hope, I added a few hills of pumpkin seeds farther back, crossing my fingers that they would get a foothold among the buckwheat and take off later, after my cover crop's job was done.

Chris told me he scatters seed for oats and field peas in late summer under his garden's canopy of tomatoes and peppers. The cover crop continues to grow through fall, even after he and his family remove their summer veggie plants. After a prolonged freeze, the cover crop

dies off, eliminating the need to terminate it in the spring.

## STEP 4: SCOUT YOUR COVER CROP

The beauty of a cover crop is its self-sufficiency, but if you allow it to set seeds, you'll find its descendants among any veggies or flowers you plant next year. That's one reason Chris recommends regularly scouting your cover crop, which basically means keeping an eye on it.

The timing of terminating becomes

a little trickier if you're dedicated to feeding pollinators, because you'll want to let those flowers bloom for a bit first.

My buckwheat began flowering a month after planting, but because its seeds didn't form quickly I was able to let it hum with bees for almost two weeks before terminating it. By then, the pumpkins I'd tucked in the back were thriving, their leaves hovering over its flowers like big green platters.

Research your crop online to get the timing right. The Illinois and Minnesota extension services offer lot of good advice on home cover cropping in the Midwest.

## STEP 5: TERMINATE YOUR COVER CROP

To end your crop's growth, you'll need to crimp (cut or break) the stems while leaving roots in the soil, where they will continue to build organic matter and release nutrients as they decompose.

You can use a hedge trimmer to crimp

buckwheat and other broadleaf plants, taking care to avoid adjacent crops you want to spare.

For grass crops like annual ryegrass, a weed whacker will do the job. A tougher grass like winter rye might require a brush cutter, which you can rent for around \$60 at Porter Hardware on Hubbell or buy, starting at around \$180, at our local Ace Hardware.

You'll also find videos online on how to make a DIY tool for this job. One of Chris's colleagues attaches a piece of angle iron to a 2 x 4, then uses it to smash down his winter rye crop with his foot. Another pulls his three kids on a plastic toboggan through his winter rye. As the plants are pushed over, they form a thick layer that distributes the kids' weight evenly under the sled. Whatever method you use, take care to avoid compacting your soil by walking on it too much, especially when it's wet. The average human heel in motion applies about

25 pounds per square inch, similar to the impact of a truck tire.

It might feel like you need to turn your "green manure" into the soil to encourage decomposition, but it's not necessary and can disrupt the soil's microbiome. Just leave the green stuff on top of the soil, where it will dry and break down slowly, naturally nurturing the fruits and veggies you plant there next season.

*Adapted with permission from an article Ann wrote for bhg.com.*



ANN'S GARDEN ON 10/13: ZINNIAS AND WINTER RYE

## LIFEGUARDS WANTED!

THE CITY OF DES MOINES IS WORKING HARD TO STAFF OUR LOCAL AQUATIC FACILITIES. FREE CERTIFICATION; WAGES START AT \$15/HR. DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO SHOULD APPLY?

**DMPARKS.ORG**

# SUPPORT LOCAL

## Meet Chris LoRang & Abbie Sawyer

BY ANN THYE

You may have noticed the nice updates to the corner of 42nd and Chamberlain. Dr. Chris LoRang and his wife, Abbie Sawyer, founded Capital Chiropractic and Rehabilitation in the East Village 10 years ago, and recently moved the clinic to Waveland Park, within walking distance from their neighborhood home. The clinic has grown to include a team of eight and is a multi-disciplinary hub with chiropractic, acupuncture, physical therapy, and hyperbaric oxygen therapy as part of Iowa HBOT.

In addition to his work at the clinic, Chris is an active member of the WPNA board and serves on the Roosevelt Cultural District Board and as Secretary of the Iowa Chiropractic Society.

Abbie is a singer-songwriter and performer. She grew up in Waveland Park, and first sang at her family's church. She was a musician during her time at Roosevelt High School. She is a member of a number of bands: Abbie Sawyer & the Flood, Abbie & the Sawyers, NOLA Jazz Band, Diplomats of Solid Sound, and The Night Lights. Abbie released her debut solo album, Love is a Flood, in 2022, and has a double album release show scheduled on April 8th at xBk Live near Drake. Chris is a member of Abbie and the Sawyers, playing guitar and contributing with vocals.

The couple has two young children and enjoy family time, cooking, bicycling, gardening. Their neighborhood favorites: Wilde Wiede cheese from The Cheese Shop and Oasis Hummus and Pascha chocolate bars from Campbell's. [abbiesawyer.com](http://abbiesawyer.com) [capitalchirodsm.com](http://capitalchirodsm.com) [iowahbot.com](http://iowahbot.com)

## Join the WPNA!

NAME/BUSINESS NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
 PHONE \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-MAIL \_\_\_\_\_

### MEMBERSHIP LEVELS

Note: Waveland Park Neighborhood Association is a nonprofit organization. Your membership could be eligible for a matching gift from your employer.

- Renewal
- \$20.00 Individual/Family Membership
- New Membership
- \$75.00 Business Membership

### PAYMENT INFORMATION

Please make checks payable to WPNA and mail to:  
 WPNA P.O. Box 30112  
 Des Moines, IA 50310

Payment via PayPal is available at [wavelandpark.org](http://wavelandpark.org) under MEMBERSHIP tab. Include your name, address, and email as a NOTE attached to your payment.

## ABOUT THE WPNA

### Board Members

**President:** Nick Coleman

**Treasurer:** Todd Snell

**Secretary:** Ann Thye

### Members at Large:

Chris LoRang  
 Megan Ross  
 Joe Wallace  
 Molly House  
 Matt Ohloff  
 Carol Lunde  
 Kathy Roate  
 John Smith

The WPNA is a non-partisan nonprofit organization in which all meetings, programs, and events are free and open to the public. It is the purpose of the WPNA to enhance and maintain the quality of life in Waveland Park.

For questions, comments, or to become a member contact: Waveland Park Neighborhood Association, P.O. Box 30112, Des Moines, IA 50310

**Email:** [info@wavelandpark.org](mailto:info@wavelandpark.org)

**Web:** [wavelandpark.org](http://wavelandpark.org)

**Facebook:** /WPNAfb



## Franklin Community Fridge

- Franklin Ave. Library, 5000 Franklin Ave., East Entryway
- Providing fresh food for the community
- If the library is open, the fridge is open
- Everything is free - take what you need, leave what you can

*Increasing Food Access, Reducing Food Waste*



Need more info?  
 Contact Nikki Hayter at [nmhayter@dmpl.org](mailto:nmhayter@dmpl.org)