

FRIENDS & FAMILY

LAWN & GARDEN

Blackhawks big bluestem adds bold color and interest to the landscape



MELINDA MYERS

No matter your garden style you are likely to find a place for this year's Perennial Plant of the Year, Blackhawks big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii* "Blackhawks"). You'll enjoy the beauty it adds to your gardens and low maintenance it requires to thrive.

This cultivar of our native big bluestem provides vertical interest, motion and bold color to the landscape. Its leaves start out dark green and develop reddish-purple tips throughout the growing season. Flowers appear in August and by September the leaves and stems of the plant turn a deep purple hue.

Hardy in Zones 3 to 9, it prefers full sun and adapts to a wide range of soil but may flop in fertile, moist conditions. Once established, it is drought tolerant. Make sure it receives needed moisture and proper care for the first two years while developing its robust, more drought-tolerant root system.

In addition to drought tolerance, Blackhawks big bluestem has no major pests or disease problems. Just cut it back to the ground in late winter before new growth begins. Its overall excellent performance made it one of the top-rated ornamental grasses in the Chicago Botanic Garden's Evaluation Study of Hardy Ornamental Grasses.

Big bluestem was the dominant grass of the prairies and largely responsible for the formation of prairie sod. This drought-tolerant grass is a host plant for many skippers and provides shelter and food for songbirds. It grows 5 to 8 feet tall and reseeds readily, making it hard for many home gardeners to include in their landscape.

It is smaller in size than the big bluestem species, just 5 feet tall and 24 inches wide, making it more suitable for home landscapes. Use it as a screen, backdrop in garden beds or as part of mixed borders. It combines nicely with other perennials, like Zagreb threadleaf coreopsis, calamint, liatris, Rudbeckia, sedum, asters and more.

Blackhawks big bluestem, like other Perennial Plants of the Year, was selected for its low maintenance, pest and disease resistance and ability to thrive in a wide range of climates. It joins past winners like little bluestem, butterfly weed, *Milleium allium*, American Goldrush *Rudbeckia* and



Blackhawks big bluestem is low maintenance and combines nicely with other perennials. (Photo courtesy of www.MelindaMyers.com)

Amsonia hubrichtii. These winners are selected by Perennial Plant Association members, which include hundreds of horticulture experts like landscapers, designers, professors, plant breeders, growers, retailers and public garden curators. You can find out more about this nonprofit program and past Perennial Plants of the Year at <https://perennialplantoftheyear.com>.

Look for opportunities to include this year's Perennial Plant of the Year in your gardens. You'll enjoy its beauty and the benefits it provides whether your gardens are informal, naturalistic or a cottage-style.

• *Melinda Myers has written more than 20 gardening books, including the "Midwest Gardener's Handbook, 2nd Edition" and "Small Space Gardening." She hosts The Great Courses' "How to Grow Anything" streaming courses and the nationally syndicated Melinda's Garden Moment radio program. Myers is a columnist and contributing editor for Birds & Blooms magazine and her website is www.MelindaMyers.com.*

AG BRIEFS

CENTURY, HERITAGE FARM RECOGNITION APPLICATION PERIOD OPEN

Eligible Iowa farm owners can now apply for Century or Heritage Farm recognition as part of the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship's Century and Heritage Farm Program. The program was created by IDALS and the Iowa Farm Bureau Federation to honor families who have owned their farms for 100 years and 150 years, respectively. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Century Farm Program, which was created in 1976 as part of the Nation's Bicentennial Celebration. It is also the 20th anniversary of the Heritage Farm Program, which was launched in 2006. Since their inception, more than 21,000 Century Farms and more than 2,000 Heritage Farms from across the state have been recognized. Families recognized this year will receive a special America250 seal on their certificate and have their photos taken in front of an America250 backdrop. To be recognized in 2026, completed applications must be postmarked or received by the department by June 1. The ceremonies honoring the 2026 Century and Heritage Farm families will be held on Thursday, Aug. 20, in the historic Livestock Pavilion at the Iowa State Fair. To apply, download and complete the application found on the department's website and return it.

SPECIALTY CROP BLOCK GRANTS AVAILABLE

The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship is now accepting applications for the 2026 Specialty Crop Block Grant Program. The grant program is designed to support projects that enhance the competitiveness of specialty crops grown in Iowa by increasing demand, yields or awareness. The Specialty Crop Block Grant Program is a farm bill-funded initiative through the United States Department of Agriculture Agricultural Marketing Service that provides each state with funding to sub-award to eligible applicants. In Iowa, projects must enhance the competitiveness of Iowa grown specialty crops in ways that benefit the entire industry. Eligible specialty crops include fresh and processed fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, dried fruits, horticulture and nursery crops, and floriculture. Livestock and poultry are not considered specialty crops under the program. The maximum amount of a sub-award is \$30,000. Iowa agencies, universities, institutions, producers, industry associations and community-based organizations are eligible to apply. Single organizations, institutions and individuals are encouraged to participate as project partners. Eligible applicants must reside in Iowa and/or conduct their business or organizational activities in Iowa and must be in good standing. Grant

proposals must be received by IDALS on or before 4 p.m. on Friday, March 27. For more information, including application materials and full program details, visit the IDALS' Specialty Crop Block Grant Program webpage. IDALS is also establishing a review committee to evaluate and make recommendations on submitted grant proposals. Individuals interested in participating on the review committee should be knowledgeable about specialty crops and/or have grant writing or grant management experience and be able to devote time to completing the review process. Additional information about reviewer responsibilities and an application form is available on the IDALS website.

NORTH CENTRAL IOWA RESEARCH FARM HOSTING FORUM, ANNUAL MEETING

Members, farmers and ag business professionals are invited to attend the North Central Iowa Research Association annual meeting on Wednesday, March 25, at the Northern Research Farm, located at 310 S. Main St., Kanawha. The association, in partnership with Iowa State University, oversees the Northern Research Farm and works with ISU Extension and Outreach to provide agronomic research, demonstrations and educational events. The annual meeting will feature the following topics: ag market outlook with Chad Hart, professor of economics and extension grain markets specialist at Iowa State; the use of the N-FACT tool to determine nitrogen fertilization rates for corn with Sotirios Archontoulis, professor of integrated cropping systems at Iowa State, and Melissa Miller, project director at the Iowa Nitrogen Initiative; in-depth look at cover crops and edge of field practices with Sean McCoy, environmental specialist with the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship; and mental health resources for rural Iowans with David Brown, behavioral health state specialist with ISU Extension and Outreach. Additionally, Matt Schnabel, research farm superintendent, and Tim Goode, director of ISU Research and Demonstration Farms, will share a review of the farm activities and an overview of Iowa State's outlying research farms. Greg Guenther, president of the North Central Iowa Research Association, will provide an update on the capital campaign and the new facility and conduct the annual meeting. The meeting is open to the public, and there is no cost to attend. Participants are encouraged to pre-register by March 23 by calling 641-762-3247 or emailing northcentralnrf@iastate.edu to ensure adequate food planning. Certified crop advisers can earn one crop management, one nutrient management and one soil and water continuing education credit for attending this meeting.

Midwest Land Management

Land For Sale

112.2 Acres m/l
Clay County, IA
Sec. 30, Summit Twp.

Open Lease for 2026!

MIDWEST LAND MANAGEMENT

For information contact Ben Hollesen • 712-253-5779

www.midwestlandmanagement.com

Midwest Land Management

Land For Sale

140.91 Acres
Clay County, IA

Blend of Pasture, Cropland & CRP with excellent hunting opportunities.

MIDWEST LAND MANAGEMENT

For information call Ben Hollesen • 712-253-5779

www.midwestlandmanagement.com

Midwest Land Management

Land For Sale

130 Acres m/l
Clay County, IA
Sec. 2, Garfield Twp.
Avg. CSR2: 83.5

MIDWEST LAND MANAGEMENT

Ben Hollesen • 712-253-5779

www.midwestlandmanagement.com

LEGAL

SPENCER CITY COUNCIL MEETING
February 16, 2026
SPENCER, IOWA

The City Council of the City of Spencer, Iowa, met on the 16th day of February, 2026, at 6:30 o'clock P.M., in regular session in the Council Chambers, City Hall, Spencer, Iowa, pursuant to law, to adjournment and to the rules of said Council.

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Wunschel, in the Chair and the roll being called, the following Council Members were present: Lyons, Moser, Bates, Illg, Reit, Peterson. Absent: Nelson

Presentations:
Chamber Update: Sheriffa Jones;
Moved and seconded to approve items on the consent agenda, as follows:
Approve City Council Minutes of January 29 & 30, 2026 and City Council Minutes of February 2, 2026;
RESOLUTION NO. 6712 RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING PERMANENT TRANSFER OF FUNDS;
Approve Renewal of Managed Services Agreement with Solutions for Police Networks;
RESOLUTION NO. 6713 RESOLUTION TO PROVIDE FOR A NOTICE OF HEARING ON THE PROPOSED PLANS, SPECIFICATIONS, FORM OF CONTRACT, AND ESTIMATED TOTAL COST FOR A PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT PROJECT DESCRIBED AS A SPLASH PAD AT RIVERVIEW PARK; SCHEDULING A PUBLIC HEARING; AND DIRECTING THE PUBLICATION OF NOTICE;
Approve Annual Support Contract with American Business Phones for \$3,925.89; Carried.
Moved and seconded to Approve 2026 Spencer Municipal Golf Course Fee Schedule (Recommended by Golf Course Board February 2, 2026). Carried.
Finance Director Update:
Engineering Report:
City Manager's Report:
Mayor's Report:
Council Committee Reports:
Upcoming Meetings:
-NWILC Meeting, Lake View, Thursday, 2/19/2026, 5:30 p.m.
-Committee of the Whole, Monday, 2/23/2026, 5:30 p.m.
-Regular City Council Meeting, Monday, 3/2/2026, 6:30 p.m.
-Committee of the Whole, Wednesday, 3/4/2026, 5:00 P.M.
Moved and seconded to approve the Bills and Claims. Carried.
Other Business/Opportunity to Address the

Council:
Moved and seconded to go into closed session pursuant to Section 21.5 (1)(C) to Discuss Strategy with Counsel Concerning Litigation. Carried.
Closed session began at 6:54 o'clock P.M.
The City Council meeting returned to open session at 7:08 o'clock P.M.
Moved and seconded to go into closed session pursuant to Section 21.5 (j) of the Iowa Code Regarding Purchase of Sale of Particular Real Estate. Carried.
Closed session began at 7:11 o'clock P.M.
The City Council meeting returned to open session at 7:30 o'clock P.M.
Moved and seconded to adjourn the meeting of the Spencer City Council at 7:30 o'clock P.M. Carried.
/s/ Donavon Wunschel, Mayor
ATTEST: Kellier Burns, Deputy City Clerk (SEAL)

2/16/2026

Vendor Name	Description	Total Payments
154i, LLC, Website		180.00
Advanced Door Systems, Parts		233.30
AFLAC, AFLAC INS		1883.18
Airgas North Central, Supplies		439.69
Allegiant Technology, Tech		44.71
Alliant Energy/ILP, Street Lights		210.51
Amazon Capital Services, Supplies		719.57
American Business Phones, Contract		3925.89
Animal Medical Center PC Hartley/Spencer, animal control		2237.51
Arnold Motor Supply LLP, Parts		1377.95
Arrowhead Forensics, Supplies		216.18
Assured Partners, Landfill Pollution Renewal		13941.78
AT & T Mobility, SO Computer cards		1155.74
Authorize.net, Credit Card Fees		44.65
BD Construction Services LLC, Snow removal		690.00
Black Hills Energy, mo utility charges		6768.46
Boji Portable Toilets, PortaPots		1680.00
Bolton & Menk Inc, Engineering		1550.00
Bomgaars, Supplies		296.23
Buds Service Inc, Towing		200.00
C & B Operations LLC, Parts		22.66
C.W. Suter Services, Repairs		3865.93
Canon Financial Services LLC, Lease		150.05
Cardconnect, Credit Card Fees		248.71
Cemstone Concrete Materials, Concrete		614.00
Clay County Auditor, Monthly Share -Local Option Sales Tax		32220.68
Clay County Regional Event Center, monthly contribution		8333.32
Clover Network LLC, Credit Card Fees		90.90
Cooperative Energy Company, Fuel		15381.10
Copper Cottage, Repairs		1217.40
Crescent Electric, Supplies		95.22
Culligan Water of Emmetsburg, Water		81.00
Dels Garden Center Inc, Arrangements		62.00
Dockendorf Equipment Co Inc, Repairs		902.50
Don Pierson Ford Lincoln Inc, Repairs		7041.80
Ecolab Pest Elimination, Rodent Program		196.46
Electronic Specialties, Inc, Repairs		10386.92
Elm USA Inc, Lease		140.00
Engineered Equipment Solutions, LLC, Parts		23825.00
Equip Truck & Machinery Inc, Repairs		17906.34
Fairchild Manufacturing Inc, Repairs		19396.10
Fastenal Company, Supplies		52.81
Feld Fire, Fill Station		1141.00
G W Pete Howe Sanitation Inc, PortaPots		111.00
GCS Tech Inc, Service contract		675.30
Galens Pro Mow LLC, Parts		31.44
Gordon Flesch Company Inc, Subscription		44.74
Graettinger Hardware, Parts		785.82
Hanna, Chris, Snow removal		621.00
Heartland Tire, Repairs		774.81
Hiway Truck Equipment, Parts		867.72
HLW Engineering Group LLC, Annual Report		3100.00
Ingram Library Services, Books		645.68
Iowa Communication Networks, Telecommunications		10.75
Iowa Lakes Community College, Education		30.00
Iowa Lakes Electric Cooperative, Utilities		1340.62
Iowa One Call, Locates		125.20
JCL Solutions, Supplies		427.34
Johnson Feed, Inc, Supplies		2291.95
Johnston Automotive & Industrial of Spencer IA Inc, Fuel		127.61
K & W Electric Inc, Repairs		450.00
Kanopy Inc, Digital video		162.00
Ken Borth Auto Plaza Inc, Parts		373.22
Kossuth Regional Health Care, Pre-employment exam		25.00
Kristat Auto Parts LLC, Parts		52.16
Kruse Cate & Nelson PC, Engineering		28353.00
Lawson Products, Inc., Supplies		71.88
Leading Edge Aviation Inc, monthly management fees		7163.16
Loffler Companies Inc, Contract		831.47
Lube Tech, Supplies		3720.28
MacQuen Equipment LLC, Parts		50.26
Menards -Spencer, Supplies		698.81
Michael Todd & Company, Parts		869.48
MichaelSon Inc, ROAD MAINT.		1646.73
Miller & Sons Golf Cars LLC, Rental		16.90
Montage Enterprises Inc, Parts		440.04
Mr Drain Man LLC, Repairs		235.00
Napa Auto Parts, Parts		2413.93
New Cooperative Inc, Fuel		11064.67
North Central International, LLC, Parts		1657.85
Northwest Iowa League of Cities, Conference		50.00
OverDrive Inc, Digital material		560.20
Patten, Jamay, Meeting		252.00
People for Pets, monthly agreement		1200.00
Peterbilt of Sioux City, Parts		787.72
Phelps Uniform Specialists, Inc., Rugs, rags, towels		292.00
Pomp's Tire Service, Inc, Repairs		96.68
RDO Equipment Co, Parts		6300.00
Recon Prox LLC, Repairs		1000.00
Schumacher Elevator Co., Maintenance		607.95
Self Law Office PLLC, Legal Fees		5885.00
Siouxland Trailer Sales, Supplies		195.45
Site Services Inc, Asbestos Abatement		1700.00
Solutions Inc, Software		282.00
Spencer Community Schools, Monthly Local Option Sales Tax		70135.04
Spencer Municipal Hospital, Pre-employment exam		856.39
Spencer Municipal Utilities, Utilities		43852.88
Spencer Office Supplies, Supplies		844.33
Spencer Trophy & Awards, Name Plate		76.00
SS Morton, Inc., Signs		70.00
State Steel of Spencer, Supplies		257.85
Syn Tech Systems Inc, Parts		324.50
Tejeda, Mateo, Tobacco Compliance		75.00
The Lakes News Shopper, Parts		220.10
Tomorrow's Solutions for Public Employees, January Contracted Finance Director Services		7812.34
Truck Center Companies, Parts		979.49
Turnet, Subscription		295.00
Ultimate Safety Concepts Inc, Supplies		331.50
USGA, Membership		175.00
Vander Haags Inc, Repairs		2074.01
Veolia Water North America, OPERATION AND MANAGEMENT 2025/26		83208.26
Verizon Wireless, Monthly tablet charges		240.06
Visa (Admin), Credit Card Charges		2033.49
Visa (Gold), Credit Card Charges		281.95
Visa (Landfill), Credit Card Charges		259.92
Visa (Library), Credit Card Charges		2201.38
Visa (Park), Credit Card Charges		201.75
Visa (Planning), Credit Card Charges		868.85
Visa (Police), Credit Card Charges		754.66
VizyPay, Credit Card Charges		670.79
Woodman Controls Company, HVAC Controls		1075.00
Ziegler, Parts		3861.48
TOTAL		496720.09

Fund Summary

Fund	Payment Amount
001 - GENERAL FUND	104902.36
061 - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT	1118.16
085 - HOTEL/MOTEL TAX	8333.32
092 - TECHNOLOGY FUND	4329.83
110 - ROAD USE TAX	22429.89
115 - GROUP INSURANCE	1883.18
124 - LOCAL OPTION SALES TAX	98189.06
130 - EMERGENCY MGMT/FEMA	1700.00
300 - CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT	27.50
301 - 4TH AVE WEST RISE PROJECT	9923.55
302 - SOUTH TECHNICAL PARK RISE PROJECT	18429.45
303 - SPLASH PAD PROJECT	1225.00
350 - CAPITAL IMP RESERVE	300.00
501 - RIVERSIDE TRUST	62.00
620 - SANITARY SEWER	116116.47
660 - AIRPORT ENTERPRISE	12343.18
670 - SOLID WASTE	31232.39
673 - LANDFILL	42248.37
690 - REGIONAL COLLECTION CENTE	780.34
949 - CENTRAL GRAGE	4862.44
950 - FUEL EQUIPMENT	16283.60
Grand Total:	496720.09

January 2026 Receipts Monthly Revenue

Fund	Period	Activity
001 - GENERAL FUND		276257.93
020 - PROPERTY INSURANCE		1351.11
040 - CEMETERY RESERVE		20475.69
041 - RIVERSIDE COLUMARIUM		0.00
045 - LIBRARY RESERVE		37338.03
047 - COMMUNICATION CENTER RES		39987.82
049 - DRUG EDUCATION		0.00
050 - POLICE RESERVE		190062.59
052 - FIRE RESERVE		2691698.00
054 - STR IMP RESERVE		941159.12
055 - SIDEWALK RESERVE		0.00
056 - PARK RESERVE		113459.42
059 - TREES FOREVER		0.00
060 - SRFS RESERVE		0.00
061 - ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT		0.00
062 - SHINE LOAN		0.00
063 - RENAISSANCE INITIATIVE		0.00
064 - CABLE TV		0.00
066 - PUBLIC WORKS EQUIPMENT		386870.12
068 - CITY HALL RESERVE		130562.64
070 - STORM WATER DIST #1		1699.63
080 - STORM SEWER RESERVE		548989.41
085 - HOTEL/MOTEL TAX		24783.81
087 - SPENCER CARES		0.00
089 - EMERGENCY FUND		0.00
090 - QUALITY HSG INITIATIVE		0.00
091 - SUBSTANDARD HOUSING		0.00
092 - TECHNOLOGY FUND		0.00
093 - ACCRUED BENEFITS		0.00
110 - ROAD USE TAX		130402.68
112 - FICA/IPERS		3534.86
113 - WORK COMP		1114.89
114 - UNEMPLOYMENT		163.20
115 - GROUP INSURANCE		47203.23
117 - CIVIL SERVICE		123.86
118 - POLICE PENSION		3481.35
119 - POLICE SPECIAL PROCEEDS		0.00
120 - FIRE PENSION		448.53
124 - LOCAL OPTION SALES TAX		280540.17
125 - T.I.F		2381.02
127 - SALES TAX TIF		0.00
130 - EMERGENCY MGMT/FEMA		487358.39
162 - SSMID		287.81
200 - DEBT SERVICE		3673.47
300 - CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT		146114.04
303 - SPLASH PAD PROJECT		60000.00
350 - CAPITAL IMP RESERVE		363600.00
500 - PERPETUAL CARE		0.00
501 - RIVERSIDE TRUST		0.00
502 - COLUMBIAN VAULT		100.00
503 - NORTHLAWN PERP CARE		200.00
504 - GRIFFIN TRUST		0.00
505 - LEACH TRUST		0.00
506 - HOEPPNER TRST		0.00
615 - WTP RESERVE		0.00
620 - SANITARY SEWER		180511.35
625 - SANITARY SEWER RESERVE		0.00
627 - 2026 SAN SEW TREAT, DEST, SW CIP		0.00
630 - SEWER DEBT FEE		102160.04
635 - SEWER DEBT SINKING FUND		0.00
660 - AIRPORT ENTERPRISE		21166.46
661 - AIRPORT RESERVE		0.00
670 - SOLID WASTE		226650.20
671 - SOLID WASTE RESERVE		0.00
672 - TRANSFER STATION CLOSURE		0.00
673 - LANDFILL		298390.15
674 - LANDFILL RESERVES		0.00
677 - LANDFILL PLANNING		0.00
678 - ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION		0.00
679 - LANDFILL POST CLOSURE		0.00
680 - LANDFILL CLOSURE		0.00
682 - ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT		0.00
685 - CELL CONSTRUCTION RESERVE		0.00
690 - REGIONAL COLLECTION CENTE		297.62
746 - GOLF COURSE RESERVE		0.00
949 - CENTRAL GRAGE		0.00
950 - FUEL EQUIPMENT		8506.00
TOTAL		9087931.70

#061

This and other legal notices from around Iowa are searchable at iowapublicnotices.com.