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**We want to hear from you!**

Send your submissions for  
the newsletter to

[ymastergardener@gmail.com](mailto:ymastergardener@gmail.com)

by June 15th for the next issue.

# Yellowstone Master Gardener



## NEWSLETTER

Volume 11, Issue 2 • April/May/June 2022

## For The Love Of All Creatures Great And Small

by Sheri Kisch

Do you think of all the living organisms in your soil from fungi, earthworms, pill bugs, beetles and the like which help increase structure, aeration and fertility? Well, I spent an extremely informational time with Julie Osslund. She is a true believer in nature's many facets and walks the walk and talks the talk.

Julie grew up in California and moved many times and places due to her father's job in the Service. They always seemed to have a garden but it was her grandfather's influence that gave her a more in-depth vision and knowledge of the importance of every kind of pollinator. His well-trained hands took grafted scions to fruiting trees in the organic orchard.

Julie's introduction to organics started with him and she carries on his teachings. The family's conservation of the land while building habitat for insects is still something she carries on every month of the year.

The smells and sounds of nature are a pure delight to Julie. She has about 30 piles of compost in her pasture in varying stages of decay. She thinks the resident skunk that has the most beautiful tail, lives off the grubs it finds in the piles. She and her daughter have planted and spread seeds of

many wild flowers and drought tolerant plants around their place outside Park City. Her favorite plants are hens and chicks, cacti, sage, and gaillardia. It was actually her daughter who saw an



announcement at the library about Master Gardener classes and they both attended in 2016. Julie finished Levels 1 and 2 that year.

Julie has spent time volunteering at the Laurel Library, MT Audubon Center, St. Andrews and Whitetail Community Gardens and Newman School Garden. She likes socializing with

others because you learn so much from them. When she taught on the Crow Reservation, they widened her circle of knowledge and inspiration about everything "Mother Earth".

Her advice to beginner and experienced gardeners is to plant what you like, help friends, relatives and neighbors because you can learn from everyone and "get your kids involved". Show them how many cute bugs they can find and what their job is. Pollinators reign supreme!



# Billings Community Seed Library Extends Its Reach

by Elizabeth Waddington

The Billings Community Seed Library had humble beginnings at the downtown First Christian Church. Emilie Burditt, an AmeriCorps VISTA member serving Billings stated, “It will hopefully take away some initial costs of gardening.”

VISTA member Jackie Patten pulled together a team of local community gardens, landscaping businesses, and sustainability organizations in 2019/2020 by founding the Magic City Community Gardens Coalition (MCCGC). Their stated purpose is to “coordinate and communicate resources, workshops, donations and general gardening knowledge across these organizations to increase access to food security in our community.”

Fast forward to the current year and MCCGC is preparing to open a “Community Seed Bank” at the Billings Public Library April 2nd, 2022. The seed bank will act as a resource center for all things gardening in Billings with seed-saving classes, community gardening workshops, educational events, and local resources information. There will be a set of organized drawers open to the public. Seed Library volunteers will operate the seed bank and people may “check out” seeds free of charge. Inventory will be tracked, and seeds will be replenished every season through donations from gardeners.

It is the hope of the organizers (among them Kristi Picchioni and Cynthia Jessee – ZOOM meeting gurus) that there will be an emphasis on native plants and those varieties that are especially adapted to grow in our area. With the collaboration of the Billings Public Library and community partners, including the Yellowstone County Master Gardeners, we welcome the Billings Community Seed Library to its new home inside the Public Library.

Additional information can be found on partner websites and at <https://ci.billings.mt.us/2038/Community-Gardens-Food-Security>

## Billings Community Seed Bank Events

Mark your calendars for informative programs presented in partnership with the Magic City Community Gardens, Billings Public Library, Yellowstone County Master



Gardeners, and the Billings Community Seed Bank.

- **April 2:** “Billings Community Seed Library Dedication” at Billings Public Library Community Room, 11:30am-1pm. Hosts Master Gardeners. Kid’s activity.
- **May 12:** “Gardening 101” with Wayne Burleson at Montana Audubon Center, 7026 S Billings Blvd., 6-7pm. Host Anthony Sammartano.
- **June 20-26:** “Billings Pollinator Week” during Pollinator

Festival at St. Andrew’s Garden/ Church, 1603 St. Andrews Drive on June 25<sup>th</sup> from 10am-4pm with speakers, displays, and activities.



The education subcommittee of the Billings Community Seed Bank outlined 12 programs at a variety of locations around the Billings area. Upcoming events can be found through the Billings Public Library website, Parks and Recreation website, and corresponding social media accounts.

## YELLOWSTONE COUNTY MASTER GARDENERS

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# Amy Grandpre Cultivates Treasured Friends

by Elizabeth Waddington

Amy Grandpre has been employed by Yellowstone County since 1979. She moved to Billings from Bowling Green, KY, for her husband's job. As a woman of faith, she moved, took a chance, and began working as a temp while someone was out on maternity leave. Nearing the end of that tenure, someone was needed to assist the Agriculture Agent, so they split out the urban aspect. It is the position she has ably filled since.

Amy's last day in the office is April 29th. The first thing she will do is hang out with her mom in Tulsa for a month. She's a huge gardener (and florist) and at 97, still lives in her own home, cooks, and gardens. Amy isn't sure what project Mom will have dreamed up for them to do together but last time she transplanted a patch of "naked ladies".

This summer Amy will enjoy the greenhouse she and her husband built and go fishing a lot since they live near the Yellowstone River. She also has plans to travel to Niagara Falls via campers for three weeks with gal pals. By next winter she figures she'll be watching movies and playing card and board games. "Azule" anyone? While she claims to be a "seat of the pants" planner, she does have a few bucket list items... travel to Tuscany, see active volcanos, Greece...you get the idea – she won't sit still any longer than a movie!

Her favorite gardening activity is harvesting. That was finally extracted out of her initial cry of "it's all fun!" as she decided that it was picking the vegetables from a season of labor, or in her words "finally getting the gold." Her favorite is pulling and drying onions.

The most interesting person she ever met was Orville McCarver who was the horticulturalist at MSU. He lit her up with what you could do with a convention. Of course, she also noted "Dr. Bob" (Gough) as both a character and a mentor. Her strangest question ever asked was when a gentleman called, worried because he accidentally injured an ant. What could he do to help it survive he worried? "I hate to hurt anything." Not sure if it was a real or prank call, Amy calmed him down and laughed with the office staff later.

Amy still wants to learn more about skills in cooking, especially using seasonal vegetables. She has discovered the internet rabbit hole of "recipes" and frequently uses one called Supercook.com to input what she has on hand



and come up with tasty recipe combos. She hopes to do more cuisine from India.

Amy wants everyone to know that she sure has appreciated serving the Billings community through her Extension office. She is proudest of getting the Master Gardener program started in Billings and creating a presence at Metra with two learning gardens. Technology has changed so many tasks and access to information but Amy has continued to keep personal communication key. Ever the optimist, Amy is excited that the new position will be an 'agent' rather than 'assistant' with full time hours and a degree. She hopes that the new agent will build and improve the program as the pulse of Billings continues to change.

Amy, all of the gardeners you have planted in your friendship garden wish you the very best in your new life adventures!

## Thank You, Amy

*As we reluctantly bid goodbye to Amy Grandpre, we profusely thank her for 45 years of service at Yellowstone County and for starting the Yellowstone County Master Gardener program. We will miss her patience, wise advice and steady hand. Amy, we wish you all the best in your future endeavors.*



*Yellowstone County Master Gardeners*

# Aerogardening

by Ann Guthals

Hydroponic gardening on a personal in-home basis is possible now with the availability of Aerogardens. Aerogardens may be purchased from the Aerogarden website or from Amazon. The Aerogarden website has frequent sales of different models. Aerogardens are also available in some hardware stores.



Aerogarden Harvest model components



Aerogarden Bounty model

There are different models of Aerogardens. My first foray into this new hobby was with the Harvest 6-hole model. I later added several of the 9-hole Bounty Basic model. There are other models available as well. There are probably other brands of in-home hydroponic devices – I will speak to the Aerogarden brand in this article because it is the brand I am using.

The basic parts are a tank for water, a pump, a float to determine water level, a deck with holes into which you put baskets with coir plugs, and an LED light deck above the main deck. All of what you need to get started comes with your purchase of a garden. You can add supplies with time or even make your own from materials in your home.

To set up the garden, you fill the tank, put seeds in the plugs which you label then place in the holes, cover these plugs with a little clear cap to create a greenhouse effect for the germinating seeds, plug in and program the unit, add liquid plant food, and go!

Ongoing care consists initially of checking water levels daily and adding water as needed. I use Big Spring water – Aerogarden has recently changed their advice on what water to use so you can consult their website to decide. Every two weeks the units need more liquid fertilizer: this comes from Aerogarden but is basically Miracle-Gro. (If you grow tomatoes, you will need to add a small amount of a cal/mag solution when you fertilize to prevent

blossom end rot.) The LED displays on the front of the machines alert you to the need for fertilizer and in the Bounty models, the water level. The display also tells you days since planting and days to next fertilizing.

When setting up your gardens, you determine the start time for the LED lights to come on. The type of plants grown determines the length of lighting time. You can modify these parameters at any time in the Bounty model.

Aerogardens can be set up anywhere there is an electrical plug (for the pump and lights). Water can be carried to the units. The lights are bright so be careful if the gardens are in a room where people will be sleeping – we learned this the hard way!

I have not had issues with bugs – a friend got aphids on her plants once. I did see some of the small gnats common to houseplants near my plants, so I set up a yellow sticky trap and that seemed to take care of the problem.

You must keep all holes not growing plants covered to prevent algal growth in the water. Aerogardeners are very clever at finding things to cover the holes – I find rocks or golf balls work well.

The roots grow amazingly thick – you can trim them

*continued on page 5*



## AEROGARDENING *continued from page 4*

with time or start the unit over if that seems best. There are great YouTube videos on cleaning and care of Aerogardens. When you re-start one, you will want to thoroughly clean all parts and disinfect; I use distilled white vinegar.

As to what to grow, I have found lettuces, mini bok choy, kale and chard all do well. The other most common plants grown are herbs such as parsley, cilantro, and basil. I grew cherry tomatoes but decided the long time for flowering and fruiting was not efficient use of the machine and finally turned that Bounty into a kale/chard garden instead. I have used my own seeds for the most part: the kale is a mini variety as are the bok choys. Johnny's Selected Seeds catalog helpfully puts a water drop symbol next to varieties that work well in hydroponics and I used that to pick out some lettuces to try.

There are other decks available for the Bounty models. I have the microgreens deck and that is a very productive use of the machine. The seeds sprout quickly and are available for harvest after only about 5 to 7 days. There is also a deck for growing starts for the garden that has many holes in it. I plan to try this for the upcoming garden season.

Once the plants are established, the productivity is quite amazing. I harvest enough every day to supply the greens in my lunch salad. You cut outer leaves or tall leaves and then the plant grows more. My first kale/chard unit has been productive for months. To harvest lettuce leaves, cut outer leaves at the base. This can be done with lettuce grown in the outside garden as well. After a while the lettuce gets old and I have replaced the lettuces in the Harvest models twice now, but it doesn't take long for the new crop to get established so there isn't a lot of downtime. As you cut the microgreens, often seeds below will germinate and you will get at least a second crop before having to start again.

There is much more to know about gardening inside with these devices. As I mentioned, there are YouTube videos and Facebook groups of enthusiasts, and if you're lucky you will find an Aerogarden buddy with whom to share experiences, ideas and seeds.

I have gotten a lot of joy from this endeavor as well as a lot of food! I love watching seeds sprout and I get to see that frequently with my microgreens garden. And the growing plants are quite beautiful – they do not face the stresses and competitions that outdoor garden plants face so they are pretty much picture-perfect in appearance. This is a pleasant and productive gardening hobby to get into without the challenges of Montana weather and soils.

## Food Hacks!

by Corinna Sinclair

**I**t's hard to imagine that any gardener has not wondered at least once, "What am I going to do with all this [fill in your plant material]? I don't want to waste it!" Tomatoes come to mind right away, and then zucchini, right?

But what about a really large aloe vera? Or that extra-vigorous mint and oregano? Using fresh herbs and other herbaceous material you have grown is so rewarding. Extend your rewards with this food hack I've learned since my indoor and outdoor gardens have begun to thrive.

My son shared an aloe vera shoot with me from a plant he had in college. The silly thing grew to almost 20 pounds with the pot; the largest leaves were almost as wide as my four fingers across the knuckles. I don't sunburn very often, and I don't have any recipes that call for aloe but I sure hated to throw those giant leaves away when they got knocked off when I transplanted it.

I did some poking around on the internet and several sources claimed I could freeze them! The magical gel lasts a few days in the leaf, and a few more days to a week in the refrigerator, left whole with a damp paper towel over the open end. However, you can keep one for months by sealing it up in a freezer bag and keeping it in the freezer. Simply wipe off any soil or other debris from the heavy skin, place the leaf or leaves in a sealable bag, remove as much air as possible and seal. For really large leaves like mine, cut them into portions that are more suitable for single use before freezing.

To use the preserved gel, remove the desired portion and thaw on the counter or gently in a tepid water bath. Peel the flat part of the leaf with a sharp knife, then remove the gel from the remaining outer hull by 'filleting' it like a fish from the skin with the knife. The gel and juice will remain intact, so process it a bit in a food processor or with a masher to make it ready to use.

<https://learningherbs.com/remedies-recipes/freeze-aloe-vera-gel/>  
<https://blog.publicgoods.com/how-to-store-aloe-vera-gel/>

Try this link to learn how you can keep fresh herbs in the freezer for tasty pesto all year round!  
<https://www.thespruceeats.com/how-to-freeze-pesto-2216928>

Do you have a food hack you use to extend the life of fresh plant material? Share them!



# Meet Our New Master Gardeners

by Sheri Kisch

## Pam Jones

Even though Pam has travelled far and wide she has kept her Mom and Dad's love for the land and Montana alive.



Growing up on a ranch outside Harlowton, she helped with her Mom's huge vegetable garden and flower beds, and also visiting the fields with her Dad.

In her teens, she attended school in the East and returned to the University of Montana in Missoula for college. After graduation she moved to California to pursue an MBA and for work. She married her husband Ed in California, and they lived there for several years in addition to living and working in international locations based out of Hong Kong for 20 years. She is the only one in her family that hasn't continuously resided in Montana. Her two brothers still run the ranch.

Ed and Pam returned from Hong Kong in 2014 and decided to live in Billings. At the fair booth, she was introduced to the Master Gardener program and soon noticed several of her friends were also members, so she decided to join. Pam has completed Level 1 and is part way through Level 2 and has enjoyed the process even if it is online.

Living in crowded urban areas plus traveling a lot didn't afford Pam much time to grow any plants "you actually have to tend and water to live". In Billings, she has been able to play with some sustainable landscaping ideas, grow ornamental grasses like Karl Foerster and blue fescue, zonal geraniums and easy-to-maintain

bushes along with rockscaping where it makes sense.

Pam's hobbies include travel, hiking, walking, and attending cultural events like opera, symphony and chamber music. She enjoys garden nursery websites and two books by Eric Bergeson: *Successful Gardening on the Northern Prairie* and *Let's Grow on the Northern Prairie*.

Pam does not like weeds or enjoy pulling most weeds, especially in wet, heavy clay soil where it is difficult to find a tool that really works well. Her only other pet peeve is cut worms and bud worms because they are hard to treat without killing pollinator insects.

Her gardening tip is to become familiar with the environment you are living in or attempting to grow plants in, and plant only what will thrive in that environment.

## Joan Brown

Joan found working on the Level 1 Master Gardener program on line very feasible. She enjoyed the interesting videos, class and manual information. Joan feels that she learned almost as much about being a Master Gardener from visiting with people she met while volunteering at St. Andrews Community Garden, the Fair Booth, and Farmers Markets. She really enjoyed getting to know other folks in the Master Gardener program. She is now on her Level 2 sessions.



Joan was born and raised in Miles City. She moved to Billings and worked as a secretary for many years

and then decided to go to MSUB for a degree in teaching. Her great love was working with three- to five-year-olds with disabilities. She retired 10 years ago after 27 years working for Billings Public Schools.

She and her husband Mike lived in the Heights on a fairly large lot. She said that she "spent a lot of my time and his money" planting flowers and pulling weeds. They decided to downsize and have moved to a much smaller house and lot on the West end.

In addition to growing many flowers in containers, Joan also grows tomato plants in pots on the patio. She has a close relative who gives them all other vegetables they need. For years, when they made trips to Miles City, they would dig perennials from her Dad's garden and replant in Billings. Her Dad always had a huge garden with a lot of flowers. Getting to know your plants and where they thrive is all part of her experiments.

Joan enjoys working on community projects and socializing, and strongly recommends trying a variety of projects for volunteer hours. You get to meet a lot of great people and learn so much from them. She thanks Jo Lamey for introducing her to the Master Gardener program.

### Yellowstone County Master Gardener Newsletter MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Yellowstone County Master Gardener newsletter is to "educate and inform," not to advocate or persuade. The Newsletter Editorial Board takes no position endorsing or opposing, approving or disapproving, any of the assertions or arguments in the contributed information. Information submitted to the newsletter is for your interest only.



# Cattail Moonshine & Milkweed Medicine: The Curious Stories of 43 Amazing North American Native Plants by Tammi Hartung

For several years this book sat on my gardening bookshelf – it never seemed the right time to pull it down and read it. I think this may be because I didn't expect a lot of information from a book with such a whimsical title.

As you see by the subtitle, 43 native North American plants are explored. Each chapter starts with a beautiful painting of the plant and is followed by well-researched, informative, short vignettes about the plant, beautifully illustrated with photographs, paintings and drawings.

While the stories about each plant are brief, there is a lot of information packed into every one. You will learn how the plant is used for food, medicines, utensils, wood, dyes, and clothing. Often the historical uses of the plants are described. There are frequent descriptions of their use by Native Americans and by herbalists.

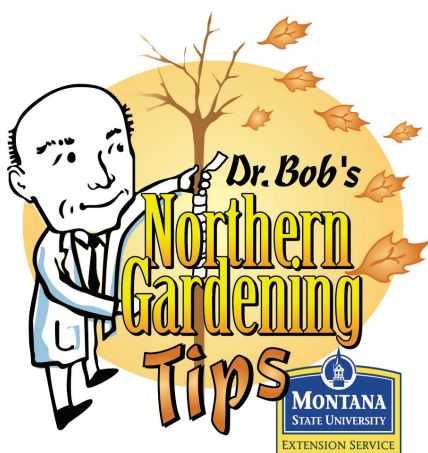
A few plants are from the northeast, south, and southeast, but



the majority are plants that are found in the western United States. Many are wild, but some can be cultivated in your garden or landscaping, like Echinacea, poppies, wild roses, yucca, cottonwoods, amaranth, raspberries, and more.

I learned many new facts about plants I am familiar with. For example, Echinacea comes from the Greek “echinos” which means hedgehog and the seed head of Echinacea does indeed resemble a small hedgehog! You will enjoy pleasant and informative reading if you choose to read Cattail Moonshine and, in addition, it is so beautiful it would make a great gift for your plant-loving friends.

Curious about the title? “To the ancient Romans, cattail was the source of “the people’s whiskey” (page 51) and page 129 describes many uses of milkweed for medicinal purposes.



## Question to Dr. Bob

by Corry Mordeaux

### Should I lime my garden this Spring?

With gardening season just about here, many of you will be tilling your soil and adding amendments for better plant growth. The soil pH is

always high on everyone’s list, but how many of you really know what the pH is all about?

Soil pH is measured on a scale of zero to 14. Seven is neutral. The lower the number, the more hydrogen ions are present. These give acid reactions. Numbers less than seven indicate acid pH and those above seven an alkaline, or basic pH. Because the acidity of the soil regulates the availability of nutrients to your plants, it’s important to keep the pH adjusted to the proper range. Many nutrients are not readily available to plants at pHs below 4.5 or above eight. Most are available around neutral, or seven. Let’s say between pH 6.5 and 7.5 to give ourselves some room. Soils below 6.5 need lime to bring them into the proper range for good plant growth. We don’t have that problem here. Most of our soils are already on the high side, so adding

lime is not a good idea. Wood ashes act as lime in raising the soil pH, so be careful you don’t add too much of them to the soil. In most cases, add no more than 20 pounds of wood ash per 1000 square feet per year. Better still, don’t add any if your soil pH is at or above 7.5.

My friends in South Dakota and Wyoming, as well as in Montana, share the similar problem of soil pH that is sometimes too high for best plant growth. Adding peat moss, compost, and sulfur will sometimes help to get the pH back down into the proper range. So check your pH with a do-it-yourself soil test kit, or have it tested by one of the many commercial labs that test soil. But try to keep it right. After all, that’s what determines the availability of soil nutrients.

Dr. Bob’s wisdom lives on.



## Level 1 In-Person Classes

by Amy Grandpre

So very exciting to finally be able to do in person classes again. We have a very nice gathering of about 20 participants... a combination of new and reviewing.

Current Master Gardeners can sit in on these classes if you like. On my email signatures under "Events", the class sessions and topics are listed so you can pick and choose if you like.

### April Sessions

**April 5, 6pm • Level 1 Master Gardener Class 5: Planting and Maintaining Trees & Shrubs**

**April 12, 6pm • Level 1 Master Gardener Class 6: Turf Grass & Irrigation**

**April 19, 6pm • Level 1 Master Gardener Class 7: Small Fruit, Tree Fruit & Composting**

**April 26, 6pm • Level 1 Master Gardener Class 8: Introduction to Integrated Pest Management**

This is a great way to keep picking up some new learning and to gear up a bit for spring... it's coming fast.

## Master Gardeners Rewards

by Amy Grandpre

\$25 Award for 400 Volunteer Hours:  
**Karen Botnen**

\$50 Award for 600 Volunteer Hours:  
**Jerry Dalton**

\$175 Award for 1800 Volunteer Hours:  
**Joann Glasser**

\$225 Award for 2400 Volunteer Hours:  
**Sharon Wetsch**



## Master Gardener On The Town

### March 3rd • Mazevo Coffee

by Amy Grandpre

Wow, what an excellent turn out for our Master Gardeners on the Town, about 25 total.

With all the extra sunflower seeds collected from last year, our table decorations consisted of packets of miscellaneous varieties of sunflower seeds. Mary Davis then shared with Amy that the sunflower was actually the flower for Ukraine, and with the war and all going on there, what a nice coincidence to accidentally honor their flower. Hopefully, as these sunflowers grow in our gardens, we can be reminded to keep these folks (and our world) in thought and prayer.

**RECIPE** submitted by Ann Guthals

### Vegetable Patties

Chopped fresh vegetables such as celery, carrots, cabbage, beets, kohlrabi, rutabaga  
Chopped canned water chestnuts, if desired  
Bean sprouts, if desired  
Beaten eggs mixed with some soy sauce  
Cooking oil such as olive oil or avocado oil



Chop vegetables finely. Mix with beaten egg mixture. The amount of veggies will determine how many eggs to use; resulting mixture should be moist but not too runny.

Heat oil in frying pan. Drop about ¼ cup vegetable mixture in mounds which you can flatten a bit to make a patty. Brown on one side, flip and brown on the other side. Veggies will cook, but still be crunchy.

If some of your veggies are very dense like beets or rutabagas, you might want to pre-cook them a bit in the microwave before adding to the patty mixture.

This is a good way to use many different kinds of vegetables from the garden in one dish. The selection can vary depending on what vegetables are ready to eat.





# An Overview Of Succulents

by Suri Lunde

Succulents are drought resistant plants with parts that are thickened, swollen or fleshy, usually to retain water in arid climates or soil conditions, a characteristic known as succulence. Succulent plants may also have other water-saving features like absent or reduced leaves, fewer stomatas, stems as the main site of photosynthesis (rather than leaves), or compact, columnar, or spherical growth form.

There are many different species and cultivars of succulents spanning several plant families, and most people associate succulents with *Cactaceae*, the cactus family. In horticultural use, the term succulent regularly excludes cacti. However, in botanical terminology, cacti are succulents, but not all succulent plants are cacti.

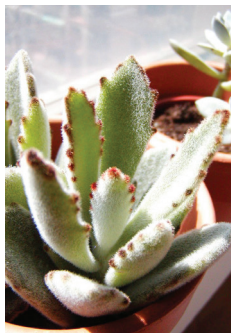
Popular with indoor gardeners, succulents are often grown as ornamental houseplants because they can be attractive and unusual in appearance, and can grow in most indoor environments with minimal care. Succulents are most commonly propagated by vegetative propagation: cuttings, division, and propagation by leaf by allowing the formation of a callus.

## General rules for growing succulents indoor

**Light:** Succulents prefer bright light and should get at least six hours of sunlight a day. Scorched, brown or white leaves indicate too much direct sunlight, etiolation indicates under-exposure to light.



Mother-in-law tongue/  
snake plant



Panda plant

**Soil:** Succulents should be potted in a fast-draining mixture specifically designed for cacti and succulents. Terra cotta or clay planters help with soil drainage by wicking away moisture from the soil and help avoid root rot.

**Water:** Water generously in summer but let potting mix dry out between waterings. During the winter, cut watering back to once every other month.

**Temperature and humidity:** Succulents are much more

cold-tolerant than many people realize. Ideally, they enjoy daytime temperatures between 70-85° F, and nighttime temperatures between 50-55° F. Generally, they tolerate humidity levels slightly above or below 80 percent.

**Fertilizer:** During the summer growing season, fertilize succulents as you would any houseplant. Do not fertilize during the winter.

## Some easy-care succulents to grow indoors

- Jade plant (*Crassula ovata*) •
- Crown of thorns (*Euphorbia milii*)
- Pencil cactus (*Euphorbia tirucalli*) • Christmas kalanchoe (*Kalanchoe blossfeldiana*) •
- Hens and chicks (*Sempervivum tectorum*, *Echeveria elegans*) •
- Mother-in-law tongue/snake plant (*Sansevieria trifasciata*) •
- Medicine plant (*Aloe vera*) •
- Christmas cactus (*Schlumbergera x buckleyi*) • Zebra cactus (*Haworthia fasciata*) • Panda plant (*Kalanchoe tomentosa*)



Cane cholla with blooms

Agave (*Agave inaequidens*, defies temperatures down to -25° F; *Agave neomexicana*, frost tolerance down to -29° F) • Cane cholla (*Cylindropuntia imbricata*, hardy cactus up to -30° F) • Euphorbia (creeping wood spurge [*Euphorbia antisiphilitica*], cushion spurge [*Euphorbia polychroma*], donkey-tail spurge [*Euphorbia myrsinites*]) • Hardy ice plant (*Delosperma nubigenum*, *Delosperma cooperi*) • Yucca (*Yucca glauca*, *Yucca filamentosa*, *Yucca baccata*)



Hardy ice plant

## Some cold-hardy succulents to grow outdoors in Zone 4

- Hens and chicks/  
Houseleek (*Sempervivum globiferum*, *Sempervivum tectorum*) •
- Sedum/Stonecrop (*Sedum spathulifolium*, *Sedum spurium* ‘Tricolor’) •

## NEWSLETTER EDITORS

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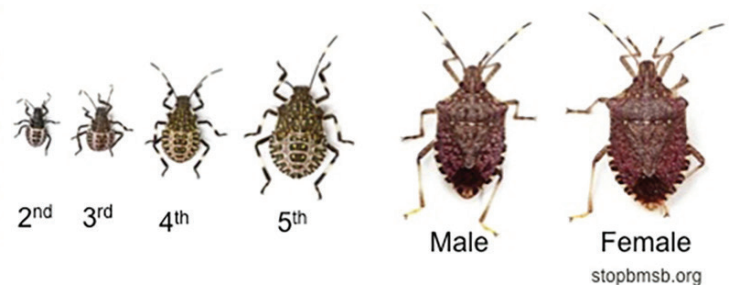
# Brown Marmorated Stink Bug

by Ann McKean

There is a new invasive insect coming to a town near you! Thought to have been accidentally introduced from Asia to Pennsylvania in the late 1990s, the Brown Marmorated Stink Bug (BMSB) has now spread up and down the east and west coasts of the United States and is working its way towards the interior. Although its establishment has not yet been officially recorded in Montana, it has been observed in the state. I spotted several in my garden this fall and have found two in my house this winter. I have pinned a good specimen for the Master Gardener insect collection.

The BMSB is a true bug with piercing mouthparts and can cause damage to a variety of host plants by scarring fruit and distorting growth. It is a significant crop pest where it has become established. It is also an unpleasant nuisance to homeowners as it gathers in large numbers in late summer and early fall looking for hibernation shelter. It prefers to overwinter in cracks, crevices, windowsills and even behind curtains. If disturbed, it 'skunks' its would-be attacker, emitting a very unpleasant odor, which can cause mild allergic reactions in some people. This is its primary defense mechanism, and it has proven to be effective against most predators, allowing it to maraud through the garden undeterred. There is hope that a small parasitic wasp may prove helpful in controlling the population.

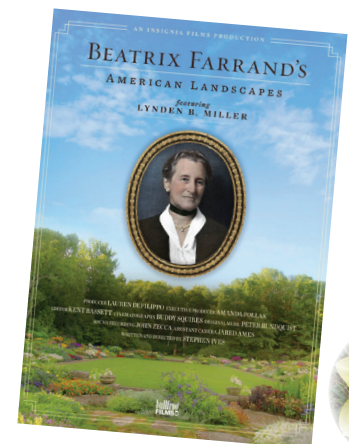
The BSMB is similar in appearance to some native stinkbugs but can be differentiated by the white banding on its antennae and dark checkered banding around the edges of the front pair of wings. The abdomen is cream colored with faint hints of rose.



## MOVIE REVIEW by Ann McKean

# Beatrix Farrand's American Landscapes

Beatrix Farrand's American Landscapes is an inspiring film about America's first female landscape architect. Dismissed by Frederick Law Olmstead as a "dabbler", she persistently followed her passion for garden design, creating gardens for private estates and public parks that have survived from the Gilded Age to today. The film is narrated by Lynden B. Miller, another hugely talented female public garden designer, as she leads us through a tour of some of Farrand's historic gardens and examines her enduring legacy and her influence on modern garden design. Beautifully filmed and insightfully narrated, this film is a must-see for all garden lovers. Originally screened on PBS, it is available on Amazon Prime.

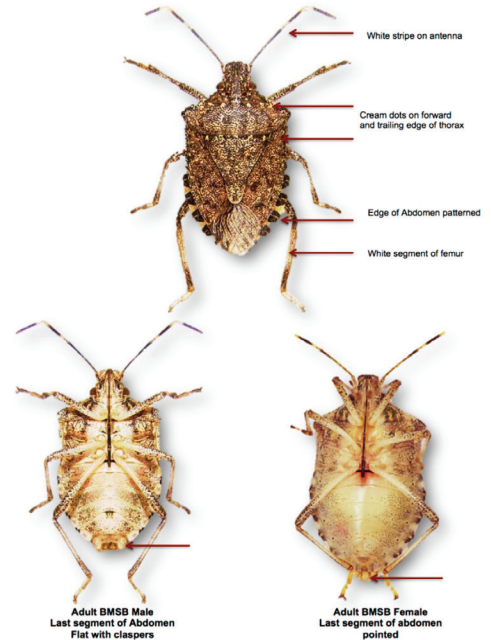


Identification of BMSB male and female

Stinkbugs don't pinch or bite and can be safely collected in a tissue or paper towel, but if you get 'skunked', it will take some soapy scrubbing to remove the scent from your hands!

If you think you've spotted a BMSB, please try to take a picture or capture it, and report it to your extension agent. MSU will be collecting data this summer.

Detailed management information and other information about the pest can be found on the website <https://www.stopbmsb.org/managing-bmsb/> and at the Intermountain Tree Fruit Guide website <https://www.intermountainfruit.org/>



# Northwest Flower and Garden Show 2022

by Sharon Wetsch • photos by Brian Godfrey

For Montana gardeners spring often does not come quick enough! Some of us like to get a jump on spring, inspiration and new ideas. This year, as usual, Bob and Debbie Wicks, Brian Godfrey and I headed to the Northwest Flower and Garden Show in Seattle. Held in February, that area of the USA is bursting with hellebores, crocuses, daffodils, and tulips all coming alive for spring. This gives us a break from winter and plans for our gardens and yards here at home. We attend seminars and DIY shows and gain much valuable knowledge to use back here in Montana as our weather permits. A plus is that there is so much to see and do in Seattle!

As we walked into the show, we were surrounded by the beautiful display gardens. These are feats of wonder put together by the Garden Creators from the Pacific Northwest. These gardens have to be put together in just 72 hours and must last for the duration of the show. They are often highlighted by flowing waterfalls, koi ponds, bonsai gardens and beautiful plants. Everything that one could imagine and new ideas we never thought of! Truly works of art known worldwide for their fabulous design and innovation.

Last show and again this year, the Fleurs De Villes display stunned and awed. These are the most amazing floral displays of art. I would describe them as mannequins dressed in haute couture all of which are created using flowers and floral greenery, much like the Rose Bowl Parade floats. This is a fresh floral display created by top Seattle florists in support of breast cancer research. Each of these displays is sponsored and used as a fundraiser in the area that the Fleuristes represent. These beautiful displays are dedicated to loved ones who have or are battling breast cancer. They have to last for the entire week and are so incredible it is really hard to describe them.



Each day of the Show is highlighted by a competition called "Container Wars". Two gardening celebrities per day have 25 minutes to design 3 container gardens each. In this competition, not only do they create these gardens, they

give gardening tips the whole time.

They explain what they are doing, using, planting and how these containers can be changed to be 3- and 4-season containers.

When the designs are finished, the audience votes on the winning designs.



Marianne Binetti, a local syndicated gardening guru and television host, emceed this show. The containers are provided by Gardener Supply Company, also a sponsor of this fun demonstration. This year featured a giveaway by Gardener Supply Company of one \$500 gift card at each daily show. Corona Tools, Osmocote, local nurseries, and a few others also give out prizes at the show. We all went away with nice prizes. To top it all off, both Debbie and I won \$500 gift cards from Gardener Supply!

The information-packed seminars offered by the gardening specialists brought in for this show begin at 10am. There are two seminar rooms plus a DIY stage where the demo shows not only give information but also show you how to do it. Most of these gardening specialists have also written books which were available at the University Bookstore and at the book signings. Amazing information that just adds to what is offered in the hour they are slated to give us a condensed version of their specialties.

Some examples of seminars offered this year were *Designing a Deer Proof Landscape*, *No Dig Gardening*, *Pruning Demystified*, *Organic Control of Garden Pests*, *Drip Irrigation* and *Big and Bold Containers*. This is just a small

example of what is offered. Imagine five days of continuous seminars from 10am to 6.30pm each day. A total of 80 seminars with so much valuable information to soak up at this show!

Of course we couldn't forget the shopping. When we were tired of sitting at seminars we enjoyed shopping and chatting with the many vendors about their products. Of course we had to purchase some and bring them home with us!

The Northwest Flower and Garden Show is such an awesome opportunity to access so much valuable information and new ideas all with one purpose – to help us be "The Best Gardener We Can Be"!



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## Gardening Advice or Myth (GAoM) *Weeding out fact from fiction*

by Corinna Sinclair & Suri Lunde

**B**elow are a few gardening advice/myths that we often hear but which may or may not be solidly rooted in science or actually work.

### **GAoM 1: Weed fabric and black plastic are good barriers in the landscape for permanent weed prevention.**

Sheet products that can be laid over the ground can be temporary tools for suppressing or killing green weed material in the landscape and garden. However, the sheeting will only suppress what is already there (accept certain types of roots with sharp tips for piercing through tough soil that can permeate the sheeting as well). Wind, animals, and gravity will deposit seeds and soil on top of the sheeting, regardless of the mulch, soil or decorative material placed above the fabric, and will begin the

process of germination within days of installation.

Removing weed barriers can be difficult after plantings have become mature and mulch material like rocks, large stones, bark, and other materials have been installed on top of the barrier. The weed control practices outlined in Master Gardener courses and employed by successful gardeners are tried and true methods of controlling and eliminating weeds in any landscape.

Weed fabrics can also hinder the growth of desired plants in the landscape. Care should be taken when using landscape fabric in permanent installations for erosion control so that plantings are given enough room to grow fully mature trunks and stems where they pass through the fabric.

### **GAoM 4: Talk to your plants and they'll grow better.**

Some scientists, like Rich Marini, PhD of Penn State University, believe our conversation can have a positive effect on plants. He says plants react to environmental stresses like wind and vibrations by growing stronger, and that our voices and conversations are essentially vibrations too.

Therefore, our voices can have a positive effect on our plants. He does not agree that the fleeting amounts of carbon dioxide we exhale when speaking to them makes an impact on the health of the plants.

Perhaps the real value of talking to plants is that we relax a little bit when telling our tomatoes we are proud of that new set of flowers. We can toss this myth into the 'maybe' bin.

