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Yellowstone Master Gardeners Newsletter



Volume 5 Issue 1

January, February, March 2016

BOB SHORT ~ MASTER GARDENERS ~ GAYLE FOLEY

Tall Bob

Bob Short is a long way from short!

Not only is he tall, but Bob carries himself majestically, seeming even taller than he already is. The eighth of eight farmer's children in

Iowa, Bob had gardening embedded into his life from the start. Apparently his chores, taking care of his mom's flowers and weeding, did not squash his love of gardening. These days vegetables provide his greatest gardening pleasure, with tomatoes his favorite. He calls them goof proof, although plenty of folks might argue with him about that. He grew pensive when ruminating about asparagus. "It takes a while." Enjoying flowers and trees with his wife Sandy ranks highly, too. She keeps excellent records, a step he considers necessary for serious gardening. "Keep a diary of weather on a calendar."

They even had a garden when graduate students living in married student housing. Later, living in Miles City for 34 years, Bob conducted beef and cattle research at the experimental station; however, now they prefer Billings thanks to ample entertainment and medical care.

Bob shared plenty of ironies about gardening. He advises those new to gardening to start small, but he knows few of us follow that advice. And he finds that the greatest gardeners are not necessarily neat because they are never finished. Great gardeners try new things. "Don't be afraid of failure." This past season, not a good year for gardens, according to Bob, handed him numerous challenges. To lengthen the season, they tried metal arches with plastic at Friendship House. First they overheated, then frost hit. Getting

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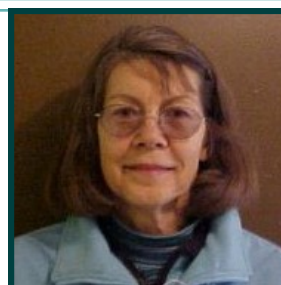
Gayle Foley

has led a very interesting and well-traveled life. She was born in Oklahoma and lived there until her father's oil-field job took them to North Dakota and then to International Falls, MN, where her mother was born. International Falls is supposed to be THE coldest place in the United States. Gayle had frozen ears to prove it. Not knowing exactly what she wanted to pursue for a career, Gayle thought it would be fun and interesting to work for an airline and see the country, which she did for many years. Eventually, she and husband David moved to San Jose, CA where she had a small garden and mostly experimented with growing flowers like her mom did. She still has fond memories of cutting camellia for arrangements. In their next move to Santa Cruz, they lived by a redwood forest and had a huge problem with deer, making it hard to grow a garden.

In California there was a very good Master Gardener program, but it required a large amount of volunteer hours, like 50 or 100, which was impossible for Gayle to meet while still working, so she waited.

Gayle's sister and brother moved to Billings along with her mother. When her mom took ill, Gayle and David moved here also and took care of her mom until she passed away. An ad for Master Gardeners in 2006 was a good incentive to join, since Gayle was now retired. She wanted more technical information about what grows here and how to handle clay soils. Gayle remembers the first classes were held in a very cold building at North Park, taught by a Master Gardener. The next year, extension personnel from Bozeman came down, including Bob Gough. Julie Halvorson was instrumental in

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Continued from page 1 Bob

three rain collection tanks to function properly caused additional headaches. Nonetheless, he loves the struggles with the successes.

He beams when talking about gardening at Friendship House, which he started in 2010. He created a two foot wide L-shaped raised bed, extending over 100 feet around the playground. Gardening with children teaches a lifetime skill both socially and nutritionally. He advocates using straw bales as a basis for soil instead of rotating crops, and raised beds cannot be topped for ease of access and control. He observes that many of us overwater, and the straw bales and raised beds do not demand as much moisture as more traditional designs. Perennials too take less water than annuals, and mulching lessens water needs. I drank in this information, in light of the water bills my gardening habit generated from the city this summer!

A challenge right now in the MG Program, as Bob sees it, is more volunteer opportunities than bodies to fill them. "The more people involved, the better." Projects run long term, not a usual fit for volunteers. He's especially impressed with the work being done at the fairgrounds by Tom Kress, Corry and Murray. Collaborating with Mary McLane for many years in teaching young people brings fond memories. They taught through the C.A.R.E. after school program, administered in six locations, including the Friendship House.

To measure Bob Short's contributions to our community through gardening? Long, immeasurable!

Submitted by Bess Lovec

WAYS TO KNOW YOU'RE ADDICTED TO GARDENING

10. Your non-gardening spouse becomes conversant in botanical names.
11. You find yourself feeling leaves, flowers and trunks of trees wherever you go, even at funerals.
12. You dumpster-dive for discarded bulbs after commercial landscapers remove them to plant annuals.
13. You plan vacation trips around the locations of botanical gardens, arboreta, historic gardens, etc.
14. You sneak home a 7 foot Japanese Maple and wonder if your spouse will notice.
15. When considering your budget, plants are more important than groceries.
16. You always carry a shovel, bottled water and a plastic bag in your trunk as emergency tools.
17. You appreciate your Master Gardener badge more than your jewelry.
18. You talk "dirt" at baseball practice.
19. You spend more time chopping your kitchen greens for the compost pile than for cooking.
20. You like the smell of horse manure better than Estee Lauder.

Anonymous -Submitted by Ann Guthals

Continued from page 1 Gayle

introducing Gayle to the Sow & Grow Garden Club, volunteer work at the Moss Mansion, and work at the Zoo, which Gayle continues. In the winter months for many years Gayle has helped with the Care After School program.

In 2008 Gayle started to volunteer on Fridays at the Billings Animal Rescue Center. This is a private, nonprofit dog and cat rescue center and Gayle's job is taking care of the kitties. For several years she would also plant the pots outside the building until the center moved.

Thinking back to when she started Master Gardeners in 2006, Gayle remembers the fun and interesting people she has met in Master Gardeners and the garden club. Her best garden tip is that when things don't grow as planned, plant them in a different spot, but don't give up, just keep trying different things. She gets gardening ideas from the magazine Garden Gate and recommends this magazine. Gayle grows flowers in her yard and gardens in two raised beds, and still remembers cutting camellia in California for arrangements

Thank you, Gayle, for your many years of volunteer service and sharing of information. You are appreciated.

Submitted by Sheri Kisch

"We know more about the movement of celestial bodies than about the soil underfoot." Leonardo da Vinci

PEAT MOSS AND ALTERNATIVES

Many gardeners are familiar with and use peat moss in their gardens. Most commercial peat moss comes from sphagnum moss, which is a “genus of atypical mosses that grow only in wet acid areas where their remains become compacted with other plant debris to form peat” (Merriam-Webster dictionary). The plant matter decomposes slowly in bogs and forms large areas of peat.

Peat has been mined and used for fuel for centuries. Since the 1940s it has also been used extensively in horticulture for its water-holding qualities. When incorporated in the garden soil, it also builds up the organic matter in the soil but does not add nutrients like manure or compost would.

Large peat bogs are found in Finland, Canada, Ireland and Sweden. Bogs are mined by drying the bog, then cutting out the peat and forming large bales. Accumulation of new peat is 1/25” per year. There is controversy about whether peat bogs can be restored to their original state after mining ceases.

The loss of peat bogs results in the loss of fragile ecosystems and often their inhabitants, water purification, flood prevention, and sequestration of carbon. Mining and drying of peat begins the process of returning the carbon sequestered in the peat back to the atmosphere, which exacerbates global warming. The Maya Project in England claims that “peatlands are being destroyed 200 times faster than they are being formed. As a result, the UK has lost 94% of its lowland peat bogs.” (Resurgence magazine Jan/Feb 2015)

Alternatives to peat moss include compost, leaf mold, well-rotted manures, straw, chipped bark, and shredded tree prunings. Utilizing these local, cheaper alternatives can reduce the mining of peat bogs and keep these important resources in their natural state.

(Additional sources for this article include an article from Natural Life magazine and a Wikipedia article on Sphagnum moss)

Submitted by Ann Guthals

“A nation that destroys its soils destroys itself. Forests are the lungs of our land, purifying the air and giving fresh strength to our people.” Franklin D. Roosevelt

THE GREAT PUMPKIN LOAF

Try the great pumpkin in a rich, spicy bread. It's more of a treat than a trick to make.

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 6 margarine | 1 tsp. cinnamon |
| 1 cup raw sugar | 1/4 tsp. ginger |
| 1 Tbsp. molasses | 1/4 tsp. cloves |
| 2 eggs, beaten | 1/4 tsp. salt |
| 1 cup cooked pumpkin puree | 1/4 tsp. baking soda |
| 2 cups whole wheat pastry flour, sifted | 1/4 cup milk |
| 2 tsp. baking powder | 3/4 cup walnuts, chopped |
| 2 tsp. cocoa | |

Cream margarine and sugar together. Stir in molasses, eggs, and pumpkin puree. Sift flour again with baking powder, cocoa, cinnamon, ginger, cloves, salt and baking soda. Gradually add flour mixture and milk alternately into the pumpkin mixture. Stir in walnuts.

Pour into a greased loaf pan. Bake in a 350 degree oven for 60 minutes or until done. Cool loaf before removing from pan.

From Cooking In The Orchard

Submitted by Ann Guthals



The general term “HERB” applies broadly to any herbaceous plant. [An herbaceous plant (in American botanical use simply herb) is a plant that has leaves and stems that die down at the end of the growing season to the soil level. They have no persistent woody stem above ground.] Herbaceous plants may be annuals, biennials or perennials.

An herb means different things to different gardeners. Some herbs are used for medicinal purposes, some for culinary projects. Others are used for their valuable dyes. Because of the broad scope of plants included in the category of “herbs” there is not a single procedure for growing all herbs. Instead, each has its own cultural requirements.

Is it ‘erb or herb? Americans tend to say “an ‘erb” while the British say “a herb.” No matter which side of the Atlantic we hail from, we generally use the article “an” before a vowel sound (like a silent “h”) and “a” before a consonant sound (like a pronounced, or aspirated, “h”).

Basil: *Ocimum basilicum*, [OH-sih-mum bah-SIL-ih-kum] Sweet Basil, Genovese Basil. This is the most widely grown of 35 species of basil and has been used in medicine and cooking to flavor soups, and stews for centuries. It is a tender annual, with a height of 18 inches and spread of 12 inches. It has clusters of small, white tubular flowers which appear in the summer. The leaves are green, oval, and pointed, and smell wonderful when crushed.

Propagation: Start seeds in early spring. Once germinated, water sparingly to prevent seedlings from rotting. Set the plants in the garden, about a foot apart, when all threat of frost has passed. Basil does best in full sun in rich, light, well-drained soil that is at least 55°F.



Site: Plant in well-drained fertile soil in a sunny, warm site, which offers some shelter from the midday sun. Basil is a good companion plant: it repels aphids, and fruit flies from other plants, as well as houseflies from the kitchen.

Maintenance: They are prone to attack from slugs, aphids, and red spider mite. They can also have bacterial and fungal leaf, stem, and root diseases. Always pick the growing tips to encourage bushy growth.

Harvesting: Pick leaves and flowering tops throughout the summer to use fresh or dry. They can also be conserved in light olive oil.

Submitted by Tracy Livingston

ANNUAL MASTER GARDENER CHRISTMAS PARTY

The 2015 Master Gardeners’ party at the Moss Mansion was a big success this year. An estimated forty Gardener’s came out to celebrate. Amy Grandpre was kind enough to sponsor everyone’s ten dollar admission this year as well as those that donated to the evening’s festivities. For the gift exchange we gathered on the main floor in the entrance way in front of one of many beautifully decorated trees. Before the gift exchange Anna Marie Lineweber, Teresa Besette and Pam were recognized for organizing the party and for all that they do volunteering at the Moss Mansion that afforded us the opportunity to celebrate and enjoy each other’s company in such a beautiful historic place.

We gathered in a large circle with gifts in hand while Amy read us a Snowman story that had us passing our gifts to the right, left, left and to the right until we had passed them down the line. When the story ended the gift you had in your hand was yours to keep. No surprise that there were many outdoor and garden themed gifts exchanged. After the gift exchange a choice of a self-guided tour or one guided by Teresa or Sandy was offered. Both Teresa and Sandy had some really great history of the Moss Mansion to share with us. Thank you for a wonderful night and we hope to see more gardeners next year.

Submitted by Donna Canino

I FOUND IT !

I don't remember hearing of a perennial called Tickseed, but if you call it Coreopsis, then I know which plant you mean. I need a late summer flowering plant and I think Coreopsis grandiflora "Early Sunrise" will be perfect.

After reading about all its characteristics, I knew I had found the plant I had seen around town and it blooms even earlier than I had hoped, late spring.

Zone 4 - 8	Attracts butterflies
Full sun	Yellow flowers
Foliage dark green	Easy care
Good for borders	18-23" height, 10-12" width
Easy care	Deer & rabbit resistant
Good as cut flowers	Almost any type soil - poor & dry best

All that is required is deadheading for continuous bloom. Coreopsis should be divided every two to three years in the spring or fall. Try pairing "Early Sunrise" with purple blooming plants like Salvia 'May Night' or Geranium 'Rozanne'.



Submitted by Sheri Kisch

Bess's Book Review

[Garden Home: Creating a Garden for Everyday Living](#) by P. Allen Smith, photographs by Jane Colclasure, published in 2003.

At first blush this large book seems just like a coffee table item of lush photographs. However, that impression misinforms the reader. Smith presents useful advice based on excellent design principles. His fluid, articulate writing style invites a warm winter read. He creates a pleasing mix of logic and aesthetics. Nonetheless, even if you are feeling flush, the cost may cause hesitation. Fortunately our very own Billings Public Library has a copy, saving me \$29.95. Apparently it is out of print, since Barnes and Noble and amazon only sell it via third party vendors; how could such a solid reference fall from grace?

I first heard of P. Allen Smith while touring DanWalt Gardens in Billings. This text represents Smith's first publication among many on gardening. Apparently his writings influenced the development of DanWalt Gardens significantly; the theories are readily apparent. Create zones of circular design rather than squares. Identify hubs of activity. Learning his trade by studying British formal gardens of the nobility, he then took those ideas to his own residential spread in North Carolina. If you intend to read no further, I sympathize. We might as well be on another planet here in Montana, when compared to England or the Appalachian foothills. Yet good design rings true no matter where one lands. He brings the lushness of his landscape down to earth with pithy comments: "My biggest gardening mistakes came when I was in a hurry."

How comforting to hear the struggles of a professional! "A garden, because of its very nature, never turns out the way you imagine it. Nature is always there." Even with these attempts to sound like an average joe, his approach is classical, symmetrical, and measured. He explores in depth 12 design principles: enclosure, shape and form, framing the view, entry, focal point, structures, color, texture, abundance, whimsy, mystery, and time. I prefer a wild, contemporary look highlighting our arid, rocky terrain, but using his ideas on zoning areas can help me create some order from chaos. He brings reasoning to planning. Blur lines between inside and outside a house. Design garden rooms. Pay attention to established traffic flow and work from that. His mantra is what Master Gardeners know, but we all need reminding: "Have an overall plan." Yet he keeps the fun in it: "be flexible enough... to see the opportunities that lie in the unexpected."

Garden Home also includes enough charts to keep factoid lovers fed. This book complements any gardener's collection of tools. A title such as *Landscape Design 101* matches what's between the covers. Maybe it would sell with that name, too. Just keep in mind that the photographs happened during fleeting moments of perfection, those brief moments which keep us going. "In the end in so many ways gardening is an act of optimism."

Submitted by Bess Lovec

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Send your favorite seasonal recipes using garden produce for submission to the newsletter to ymastergardener@gmail.com by the 15th of March

TIPS

Winter is a good time to get out all the gardening tools.

Clean them of all dirt, sharpen any blades (shovels and hoes included) and then rub down all wood handles with BOILED linseed oil. After drying, the handles will look better

than new!!

January, February and March are the best months to prune.

You can spray paint marks on branches that need to go ahead of time.

For more gardening information visit the Grapevine at

www.co.yellowstone.mt.gov/extension/

GIVE AWAY

1 UPRIGHT FREEZER JUST FOR THE TAKING - GOOD FOR INSULATED STORAGE. CALL 628-6110

New City Library Provides Great Resource for MG Educational Programs

The Library's newly designed Children's Area with its concrete floor and sink and the Library's Community Room with projector, screen and state of the art equipment are proving to be ideal locations for educational presentations and workshops on gardening. Master Gardener Tracy Livingston has taken on the task of coordinating with the librarians the scheduling and promoting of these events. Since the opening of the new Billings Library building, Yellowstone County Master gardeners have used the library facility to present five programs to children, three programs to adults and one program that was for both children and adults. All programs have been presented free of charge to members of our community and were on topics that were relevant to those interested in gardening. Plus, these programs have offered Master Gardeners an opportunity to enrich their gardening knowledge and have helped promote community interest in the Master Gardener Program.

Topics covered in workshops with the children at the library have been Planting Seeds, Planting Bulbs, Sense-sational Plants, Terrariums and the Water Cycle. Sharon Yazak, Sheri Kisch, Vonnie Bell, Joyce Hendricks, Mary McLane, Murry Lyda, Tracy Livingston and Elaine Allard have all done a great job of helped make these children's activities a success. Master Gardener and beekeeper, Sheri Kisch gave a very interesting and informative talk, "Life in the Hive", that was geared towards both children and adults. Extension Agent Jackie Rumph, taught us new ways to make tasty soups to perk up our fall and winter dining options and also did a presentation on making healthy food choices throughout the holidays. Master Gardener Murry Lyda

discussed putting the garden to bed for the winter and gave many helpful gardening tips. Master Gardener Tracy Livingston presented on Herbs that will grow in Montana and some of their culinary and medicinal uses.

Coming up on January 13th 2016 from 3:00 to 5:00 at the Billings Public Library Community Room, Amy Grandpre (our "head honcho" and Yellowstone County Urban Horticulture Assistant) will present information on the upcoming 2016 Master Gardener classes that starts in February and discuss things that can be done during these winter months to give us a head start on our gardens. She will also discuss the benefits of using square foot gardening and raised-beds.

Several future Master Gardener programs are being planned for the library. We are hoping to have Laura Finkbeiner from Grass Range do a workshop on pruning this coming spring. Also, bee expert Jerry Bromenshenk from the University of Montana has communicated an interest in doing a presentation. Hopefully, some of you Master Gardeners will take advantage of this opportunity at the Library to share your area of gardening expertise with all of us Master Gardeners and the rest of the community.

Submitted by Elaine Allard



TEACH



ENJOY



LEARN

HERE IS THE DIRT

One of the first seed catalogues can be traced back to Europe in 1612. They were called *Florilegium*.

Emmanuel Sweerts, a Dutch Merchant who specialized in seeds, bulbs and exotic plants produced one of the first *Florilegium*'s for Kings and Queens who wanted to impress with stunning displays of hard to find flowers and exotic plants. Soon after many *Florilegiums* began to be produced in Europe by seed merchants.

In the early 1800's, a New York grocer who emigrated from Scotland named Grant Thorburn began to form his own seed catalogue. His first attempts were unsuccessful and landed him in debtor's prison for one year. Thorburn eventually became successful producing the G. Thorburn and Sons Catalogue.

His catalogues did not just offer flower seeds, they offered vegetable seeds, bulbs, greenhouse plants, herbaceous plants and merchandise such as tools. Thorburn began adding additional gardening information like calendars and dedicated the last four pages to information that women could translate into the meaning of each flower and easily produce a bouquet with a special meaning.

Today the number of seed and plant catalogues have tremendously increased with the addition of specialty catalogues. They offer a wide variety of information and merchandise some new and innovated items as well as the good old standbys. Do you use the same catalogues each year or do you add a new one to your collection each season? If not, I encourage you to try a new one. You may find something that you could not live without growing!

Submitted by Donna Canino

IMPORTANT DATES

January 5-7	Montana Green Expo at the Hilton Garden Inn, Missoula Ian Baldwin keynote speaker
January 6	Start of C.A.R.E. after school program, 3-5 pm. Mary McLane needs 4" pots and water bottles, AND more help.
January 13	Billings Public Library presentation by Amy Grandpre on upcoming Master Gardener classes and winter garden planning.
January 16	2nd Annual Lewis & Clark Master Gardener Celebration at the Fairgrounds.
February 2	Level I Master Gardener Classes start Tuesdays 6:30-8:30 pm.
February 17-21	Seattle Northwest Flower and Garden Show

If you have been having trouble online reaching MSU departments this may help.

"Our computer systems has been updated campus-wide and might cause the error message for the forms. Unfortunately you will have to bookmark the forms again."

Plant Disease: <http://diagnostics.montana.edu/documents/Disease%20ID%20Form.pdf>

Insects: http://diagnostics.montana.edu/insects/docs/Insect%20Identification%20Form_revised%2013%20Jan%202015.pdf

Plant ID: http://diagnostics.montana.edu/documents/Plant%20Identification%20Form_07_2012.pdf

Mushroom ID: <http://diagnostics.montana.edu/documents/Mushroom%20ID%20form.pdf>

Turf Diseases: <http://diagnostics.montana.edu/documents/Turf%20Disease%20Form.pdf>

Eva Grimme



<http://www.co.yellowstone.mt.gov/extension/horticulture/mastergard.asp>

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WINTER WONDERLAND



~ ~ BEST WISHES FOR A HAPPY NEW YEAR ~ ~