

**Yellowstone Master
Gardeners**
P.O. Box 35021
Billings, MT 59107

YELLOWSTONE COUNTY MASTER GARDENER



We want to hear from you -Send your submissions for newsletter to ynergarden-er@gmail.com by March 15th for the next issue.

Newsletter

Volume 11 Issue 1

Jan., Feb., March 2022

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Covidcado Grower: An Interview with Elizabeth Waddington

~ by Bess Lovec

Elizabeth dealt with the Covid lockdown as well as could be, by growing an avocado seed into the large, beautiful plant she holds in the photo. What better way to cope? She radiates warmth in both actions and attitude for all things living.

I met her decades ago when she was my now-40 year old daughter's preschool teacher. She embodies the soul of a professional educator, recognizing and nourishing each child's unique abilities and needs, much as great gardeners know types of plants and their growth patterns. Her gardening life did not begin during her childhood, though. Married student housing in Bozeman had garden plots, so they started gardening "because we were broke." Her self-deprecating humor pervades almost everything she says!



The research, planning and editing skills necessary for her to teach successfully in Billings' school district for many years helped her become a productive gardener. Her disciplines of art, and later library science, taught her to "fit it all together" and "edit what you don't want." Her latest effort will be raised beds built from scrap lumber. Her spouse enjoys these projects, and Elizabeth explains that his PhD. in Chemistry gives him license "to fiddle fart around with stuff." Future goals for her will be working with the seed library, maintaining organizational aspects.

She's most proud of altering her clay soil composition 30 years ago by introducing leaves, sand, peat, and a limited amount of manure. Her favorite plant in this rich soil? The iris, with its "wildly divergent colors... I've never met an ugly iris" she pined. Lately she is most flummoxed by climate change, as it has rapidly tossed temperatures and peak blooming times into an unknown zone.

Continued on page 2 -

The glow of having completed Master Gardener Level 3 had not faded when I interviewed her. She loved the various activities, such as touring a food forest and a Native American garden. Elizabeth described it as “phenomenal”, and hopes the Master Gardener training in Billings can move to a more synchronous model. Understandably, classes had to move online during the pandemic, which is wonderful for those far away from classes, and we agree that the zoom option needs to continue, but in-person demonstrations and hands-on tasks prove essential for a broad experience. During this shift to a hybrid model, Elizabeth really appreciates Amy’s concerted efforts to provide social gatherings.

Her volunteer activities include gardening in the Meadowlark Courtyard (AKA cancer patients’ duplexes) and talking with people who visit the Farmer’s Market MG booth. Plus Elizabeth ironically published this very newsletter. If you’re seeking a rock-solid ally in the world of gardening, education, or merely the world in general, look no farther than my dear friend Elizabeth Waddington.

Another way to read the Master Gardener newsletter

Enjoy the Yellowstone Master Gardener quarterly newsletter online! Share with friends and access recent editions in the archives. Find local interviews, interesting articles, tasty recipes, upcoming activities and opportunities, plant features and more. Save the URL in your favorites or bookmark it for quick and easy access from your computer, phone, or other connected device. Comment, share ideas, and encourage others to become a Master Gardener.



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Fall News from Amy’s Office



We’ve had some absolutely lovely gatherings this fall. So nice to see familiar faces and lots of new faces too.

On September 16th, Master Gardeners once again participated in the annual Arbor day activities, this year held at North Park. Pine cones were utilized by dipping in heated Crisco oil and then rolled in bird seed to make a most clever winter bird treat. The Awesome Bug Show was also a feature of this year’s Arbor Day.



I think our crowd really likes their ice cream. September’s Master Gardener’s on the Town event was held at Candy Town, and mercy can one get their sweet tooth mighty happy there.



Then Christmas party time and the event was quite a fence sitter...do we try doing our usual big dinner gathering or should we do "something else." Well, "something else" won out, and we filled up City Brew the evening of December 2nd. So many turned up that it was getting a bit squeaky in there. But we managed just fine, enjoying treats, conversations and of course this year's Left/Right Christmas gift exchange story...Suing Santa.



Now on to 2022 and already there are some nice suggestions being made for Master Gardener events: picnic at Master Gardener Larry Walsh's acreage to scope out his fruit growing adventures, Boja Farm in Bridger, Blake Nursery, and Floating Islands.

So if you have some nifty places you know of that would appeal to a Master Gardeners interest & curiosity, I'd like to encourage you to share these suggestions with me as well.

Happy New Year to All...Amy G.

Level Awards

Lev. 1 Shirt & Certificate
Barbara Miner
Mary Kryzer Johnson
Larry Walsh
Dan Yazak



Lev. 3 Shirt
Roberta Fuller
Elizabeth Waddington
Paul Scarpari
Steve Restad

Lev. 2 Shirt & Certificate
Diane Slind

Welcome to new participants:
September: Kimberly & John Maynard, Christine Romans, Anna Zimmerman, Dan Yazak
October: Janet Baniewich
November: Richard Gamba, Vachelle Poetochena
December: JoAnna Nye

~ Submitted by Amy Grandpre

Barbara Miner

By Elizabeth Waddington

Who knew there would be benefits to the COVID lockdown? Barbara Miner is one of the many participants who found the online format of the Master Gardener program was more accessible. She appreciated the ability to look and listen again online to the lessons and feels she has a better understanding of soil chemistry.

As a child she remembers picking huge beefsteak tomatoes from the garden and going inside to watch episodes of Star Trek. She has lived in Billings for 9 years after living in Colorado most of her adult life. She started gardening while in college by convincing a landlord that she would revert a plot at the end of her lease.

Barbara now works with the Mayflower Congregational Church with their sustainable land use area that includes several acres for a Midtown Market, lavender for pollinators, 20 raised beds for community use, and a bird sanctuary. Personally, Barbara grows vegetables, edible flowers, lavender, blueberries, mint, and a giant dahlia. She favors plants that are gorgeous as well as edible. Barbara plants multicolored carrots and Chioggia beets because they are lovely to serve. She strongly supports local food (Yellowstone Valley Food Hub) and diversification, especially of local seeds. She works with the Seed Library being established at the Billings Public Library.

Her other interest has been art, drawing anything that captures her interest. She has recently ramped up her art oeuvre with classes in other mediums.

Her gardening advice – PATIENCE! It is exciting to “beat the season” by planting seeds in peat pots, but you need to watch and wait for the season (as in don’t start those veggies indoors in February).



Larry Walsh

By Sheri Kisch



Larry and his wife Christie moved from Denver, CO to Worden about nineteen years ago to a house and five acres of alfalfa with a lot of potential. Larry grew up with parents gardening and preserving some of what they grew and he and Christie are continuing the tradition, only on a much larger scale. They vacuum pack, freeze and can hundreds of pounds of fruits and vegetables from the orchard and 70' x 90' garden. Some day he would like to sell at the Farmer's Markets.

With retirement coming closer, they developed a plan starting with fruit trees and berry bushes. He plants many different things (he likes to be adventurous) as he puts it “some make it and some don’t”. In his area Larry has to contend with a high water table. Sometimes during the year this is at twenty-four to thirty-six inches.

He prefers bare root plants because they are cheaper, easier to plant and seem to grow just as well as balled and burlap trees. Each year he has planted more varieties of standard apples, plums, pears, cherries, currents, raspberries, elderberries, gooseberries, horseradish, rhubarb, honeyberries, seaberries, buffalo berries, chokecherries and cold hardy wine grapes. Larry still likes to hunt and fish, but since starting the orchard, his ventures to the

wilds are fewer.

Larry's wife thought since he had gotten his applicators license, he might benefit from the MG program so she signed him up last year. He has enjoyed the BBQ gatherings but likes gardening on “his time” with his trusty old worn-down sharp shovel.

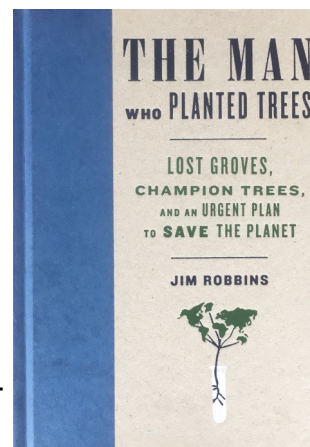
I can hardly wait until we will be able to visit this gardener's dream.

The Man Who Planted Trees—Lost Groves, Champion Trees, and an Urgent Plan to Save the Planet

By Jim Robbins

Book Review by Ann Guthals

Twenty years ago a nurseryman from Michigan—David Milarch—came up with an idea to save the world. After surviving a near-death experience, he was motivated to save the forests, in particular the redwood and sequoia forests of the west coast of America. He observed that logging takes the best trees and leaves the trees least likely to survive. His idea was to clone the best trees, the “champion” trees, before they were gone--not only the redwoods but hundreds of other species--then plant them in “living archival libraries” around the country where conditions were right for each species. This was and is the Champion Tree Project, which has now spread to other countries as well.



If you love trees and realize how valuable forests are, this book is both wonderful and painful to read.

It is wonderful because it takes each of several trees in the project and gives you fascinating information about them—not only the giants (redwoods and sequoias) but also white oak, bristlecone pine, willow, cedar, yew and others. For example I loved reading about a redwood stump so big (33 feet across) that dances were held on it. (Unfortunately there are so many of these big stumps because all but 5% of the primeval redwood forests have been logged, forests that once covered millions of acres.)

It is painful because it informs us as to how much we have lost as we have cut down the forests of America and how our remaining forests are endangered from fires, beetle kill, drought, further logging, and the effects of climate change. For example, it was so sad to read that even the old bristlecone pines are in danger of extinction because the warming climate has brought insects to these mountain areas that cold used to keep away.

Yet there may be hope if this champion tree project can actually help re-establish forests and if this and other important books inform people of the incredible beings that forests are, more incredible and valuable than we can even know. And there may be hope if more people join Milarch and Canadian botanist Diana Beresford-Kroeger in their mission to re-forest the world. Time is short to slow climate change. I hope many more people all over the world become motivated to restore our forests and that this happens soon.

Heritage Plants

LOVE OF HERITAGE PLANTS

~ Submitted By Sheri Kisch

Every time I walk by, divide or care for one of my heritage plants I can't help but think of the person that gave them to me and what they meant to me in terms of beauty and enjoyment, both the person and the plant.

Peonies are my most loved plant. I got starts from the row of peonies that grew alongside my parent's garage for 40 years and then grew at our house for the next thirty-eight years, huge plants. In the 80's I acquired two more plants from my great grandmother via my God Mother on her farm. (She also gave me her lone pink carnation plant and starts of parsley.) I have white doubles, a pink and white, an all pink double and red Memorial Day plants. I took parts of each daughter plant to our new place in 2018. In 2020 Vi Hills, former Laurel MG gave me three more peony starts from her row in front of her house

that she nurtured for many years.

Also in the 80's I received some miniature (as in 4" high) purple iris from a friend. She said that they had belonged to her mother-in-law who grew them for 60 years. I had kept them for 38 years and brought some to the new house.

We moved from Billings to Laurel in 1969 and rented from a railroad family. They had a wonderful garden area in back that was composted with sand and pig manure from the rail cars. In the corner was a ruby red rhubarb plant like I had never seen. It had huge inch + wide stalks that were at least 18" long. Before we left for the house in the country, I asked if I could take a start and did that tripled after 46 years. They told me the plant belonged to her mother and at that time was 60 years old. One root moved with us and it is growing better than ever. It is about the only thing here that loves the clay soil. My second love is in bulbs, grape hyacinth, daffodils, narcissus and tulips. When we moved to west Billings I dug up starts of all the above, potted them and then sunk them into my sisters' garden for the winter. These were all bulbs I had grown from the 80's and 90's. One group of tulips came from the above rental. I think they were called 'parrot tulips' that had pink petals with a green stripe. They have since reverted to solid yellow color. The best part is that they have a wonderful spice fragrance like no other tulip I have grown and multiply profusely.

I hold all these plants in great esteem because they are extremely hardy, prolific, and beautiful and came from someone who shares the same attributes.

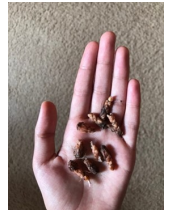
Heritage Plants

~ Submitted by Elizabeth Waddington

Transcontinental companion



Oxalis – You may think of the shamrock when the stores display them for St Patrick's Day in March but they are really an airy, versatile houseplant year round. My plant was a gift from my best friend's mother, Penny Poor (no, I didn't make up that name). I stayed with them in her childhood home near the University district of Seattle while I attended grad school at the University of Washington. When I left to get married, she gave me a small green shamrock plant. Subsequently, the plant traveled with us to Bozeman for Mark's grad program, to Indiana for a post-doc, and to Eugene, OR for another post-doc.



When it came time to move to Miami, FL for his teaching position, I took only the corms in a baggie with me on the plane (along with a newborn and a 5-year-old, but they were in a front pouch and on a bungee cord wrist leash, respectively). Our household goods weren't being shipped for several weeks and we were living in a no AC dorm room during August heat until we could find a rental house. Oxalis does best with some steadfast conditions of light shade, moist soil and moderate temperatures -nothing I could control. I carefully planted the corms, resuscitated the plant, and kept it in a special pot on my desk for two years before it was packed up to make yet another move to Billings. It is a busy plant with daily stretching to reach for the sunlight, nightly folding of the leaves, and frequent blooms. My oxalis brings a smile to my face as I remember its heritage.

Jade plant great grand babies



My current generation of jade plants are being grown for my sons from cuttings that originated with my grandparents in San Jose, California. When Grandma moved up to Washington state after Grandpa passed away, she was unable to bring her jade plant. In the 15 years or so that they lived in California the plant thrived out in the back yard in the shade of the lanai. The pot and plant were so huge they wouldn't fit through the house or backyard gate. It would have required a crane to hoist it up over the house! So, the first generation of cuttings were taken, transported in a suitcase on an airplane, and the plant was left for the new owners. My Mom has a large planter from one of those original cuttings as does my brother in Seattle and she has subsequently given starts to my other two brothers and me as well as many friends. I have cuttings from mine

now to share with my sons when their lives / houses can accommodate plant parenting. They are remarkably forgiving plants and mine sit out on the covered patio each summer. It always surprises me where the new little leaves will emerge after a good pruning. Sometimes just a leaf poked into the soil will create a new baby plant. What I love about jade plants is their elegant twists and turns as they age with such grace.

Spiral leaf begonia

My husband's grandma had card tables of plants in her house in the Wallingford District of Seattle. When she moved to stay with his mom, I was invited to take any plants I wanted. I took several including a gorgeous blooming Christmas cactus and a glossy spiral leaf begonia. The cactus died immediately (it probably rebelled at being moved in the car during the winter to Bozeman). However, the begonia survived and thrived. As a matter of fact, I gifted starts back to my friend Alice and her mother, Penny (see above oxalis story). This begonia has long stems that rise above the mass of leaves for the delicate blooms to almost look like little clouds of blush and white. What I love most about the plant is the individual spirals. Unlike Fibonacci's formula (or the Golden ratio) they are not exact proportions for all leaves. Nature has such amazing beauty in the details and spiral leaf begonias certainly showcase both.



Ginger Plant

~Submitted by Debbie Wicks

Until I was fourteen years old my family lived in the San Francisco Bay Area in California. In California my mother was an avid flower gardener. We had flowers that Montanan's only see in magazines. We had fuschias that grew on large shrubs, Hydrangeas on hedges bigger than I was, Star Jasmine vines, Birds of Paradise, dahlias we could over-winter in the ground, Mums (which we were taught to call Chrysanthemums in California), etc. So many beautiful flowers. My family moved to Montana in 1972 where we learned to appreciate Peonies, Iris, Lilacs, among other lovely perennial flowers and many annual flowers and assorted fruit trees. My mother had transported some large pots with some of her "California flowers" in hope that some may actually grow in the drier northern climate.

One of the plants she transported was a Ginger plant that grew in the ground along our garage in California. I have a memory of being told it came from Hawaii. Truthfully, I was likely told that they grow in Hawaii. Not sure I can trust my memory... I remember waiting for it to bloom because the scent was sweeter than any that can be imagined. The large flower – one per stock, was amazingly beautiful.

In Montana, the plant would grow – it is a nice enough looking plant, it would die back in winter and then regrow the next spring but never bloom. My mother passed away 11 years ago. I inherited the Ginger plant and vowed to make it bloom in Montana. For 10 years I would bring the plant outdoors in late Spring hoping to see and smell the beautiful flower I remembered from my youth. After 8 years I had promise that the plant would bloom as a large bud appeared. Winter came too early the first year and I didn't get the plant indoors early enough to help it along so it froze without blooming. The following year, another bloom... I was on top of it, got it into the warmer heated shop only to get an indoor "partial bloom". I was thrilled to see and smell the flower again. Spring of 2021 one of the plant stalks had not died back over the winter as in previous years. I moved the large pot outside, as I had done previous years, expecting the stalk to die back – but it didn't! Instead, a large bud started to form. I checked it almost daily to see what was going on with it. I could hardly believe this plant was actually going to bloom outdoors in summer in Montana! Sure as heck, it DID! The only thing missing was my Mom to see her Hawaiian Ginger plant blooming after 49 years.

Now a repeat performance in 2022???



Heritage Plants

~ Submitted by Ann McKean

Sometime in the 1950's, my grandmother planted a row of peonies down one side of the yard of the house where I would grow up. They were a mix of different varieties and they were all beautiful, fragrant and prolific. I have so many happy childhood memories that involve the plants in the gardens of that house.

When I headed off to college, my parents retired, sold the house and moved to Florida, and fifteen years later I moved to Florida too. I travelled to my home town in Maryland to visit friends and family every year and I still thought about the beautiful gardens that gave me so many happy memories and helped nurture my love of gardening. On one of my visits, I decided to introduce myself to the family that were so kind and welcoming. The house they gave me a full tour of the loving restoration they had done. It was beautiful. Then we went out to the garcarlesii whose perfume was so intoxicating under the huge Magnolia stellata in the plants I remembered were no longer there. peonies, which were still looking pretty up the courage to ask if I could take some thrilled and brought me a shovel and some corms. Of course, peonies do not grow in mined to somehow have a peony from my pawned them off on two friends in Maryland who gardens. Years later, I returned and divided one again and took it to my mother-in-law's garden in Chautauqua New York.



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Five years ago, I finally had a garden where the peony from my grandmother's garden could thrive, so I divided the plant in New York and brought it here. It is now part of my own row of peonies down the side garden of my yard. I left home for college when I was 18. I retrieved the peonies from my grandmother's garden when I was 34, and I finally got them into my own garden when I was 53! You can bet that if I move, I will bring some corms with me! For the brief flash of time every spring when they bloom, the gentle scent of peonies washes over me and the time machine of memory takes me back to that beautiful happy garden of my childhood.

A Zoo Story Involving Plants

~ Submitted by Merita Murdock

Years ago, when the Yellowstone County Master Gardener program was just getting started we did the geranium fest at the zoo. Back then we grew all of the geraniums in the basement of the zoo offices and then asked the community for perennials from their yards. I would go out on weekends and during my lunch hour and dig plants out of folks' yards. My whole side yard area was full of potted up plants.

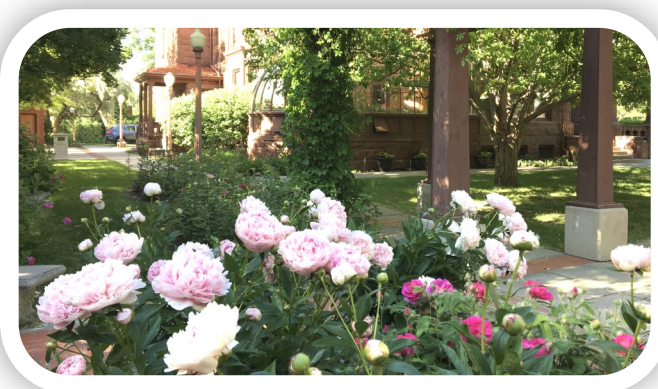
Well there was this one fellow, Slim, that was connected with the zoo and he had a lot of special roses and other perennials to donate. Slim was dying of bone cancer and we had many visits while I was digging in his yard. He was basically giving us his entire flower garden, lots of beautiful roses as well as other ornamentals. Over the month or so that it took me to get all the plants we developed a friendship chatting about everything. One day I was digging and he told me these plants that were just starting to come up were his favorites and he didn't want me to take them to the zoo; he wanted me to have them! So I, feeling so special, take these transplants home and plant them right up front where I can see them and remember my times with Slim. They begin to grow and I baby them and make sure they are happy little ones.

My husband tells me they look like thistles—I'm like "no way!" Those are Slim's special plants, and he is gone now and I miss my talks with him. Well yes, you got it; husband was correct! They became beautiful milk thistles!!! So Slim got the last laugh! I don't know if I laughed more or cried more on that day. That was one of the best jokes played from the grave. Hats off to Slim and all his gardening and life lessons.

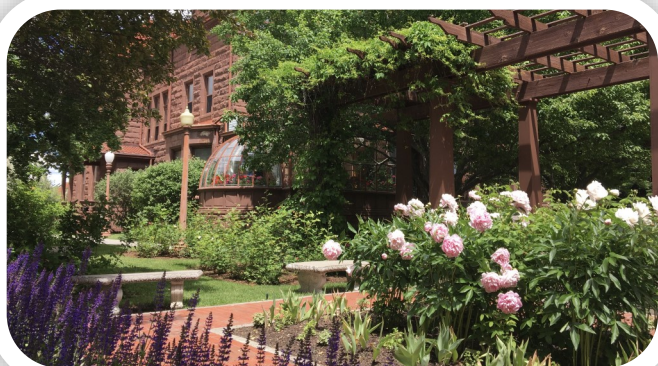
Moss Mansion Heritage Plants

~Submitted by Stacey Jacobs

In the early 1990's a large perennial garden was created by the driveway at the Moss Mansion and filled with a variety of traditional period perennials. One of the hardiest and longest lasting plants to be placed there was *Alchemilla mollis*, also known as Lady's Mantle, transplanted from the local garden of Kitch Klein. This low growing perennial with soft gray-green foliage blooms in late spring and early to mid-summer with frothy sprays of tiny chartreuse flowers. A staple of English cottage gardens, it grows easily in sun or shade and makes a beautiful edging plant.



Historically, Lady's Mantle has been widely used as a folk medicine in Europe. It has been used to make an herbal tea for treating a variety of women's reproductive health issues as well as a number of other conditions from ulcers to ear infections. The roots and leaves have also been used for poultices. Fresh young leaves are edible and can be used in salads, on sandwiches and in pesto.



Alchemilla gets its name from its use by alchemists of medieval times who believed that the sparkling droplets of water that collected on the plant's leaves in the early morning from dew or rain were a kind of powerful "moon water" that had magical healing powers to cure diseases and prolong life. They also believed that this water could transform common metals into gold.

At the Moss Mansion, we enjoy the soft effect that the lush, scalloped leaves of the mounding Lady's Mantle give to the edge of our large perennial garden and to our shade gardens.

We want to extend encouragement and friendship to all of our Master Gardener friends, new and cherished old acquaintances. These past two years have been a challenge to take classes, meet other people, volunteer safely, and all the other stresses of living in a pandemic situation. One of the joys is teaching young people about the opportunities we find outdoors. We will get through this and continue to share our love of all things gardening with each other and our community, savor the connections our organization nurtures, and reach out to other gardeners when you need help. We are here for each other and look forward to spending more time together in the coming year.

My “Perennial” Violet

~ Submitted By Ann Guthals

About 35 years ago, a good friend of my mother-in-law named Frannie gifted me a lavender-colored violet. Frannie was a violet enthusiast, growing dozens of them in her basement. I had never owned a violet before, but this first one was pretty forgiving and not only lived, but created “babies” easily.



I experimented with dividing the violets and was fortunately successful. And this first violet also got me noticing others which somehow found their way home with me.

Gainan’s and the annual violet club show kept me well-supplied with new beautiful and unusual varieties. I grew a dozen young violets one time from the original plant and Amy gave them to other master gardeners.

As a thank you, Amy gave me two unusual varieties to add to my collection.

At one time I think I counted more than 40 violets—they covered our dining room table (we took to eating at the kitchen table as the dining room had become the garden room) and spilled over into other parts of the house. Not too long ago I trimmed my violet collection to a more manageable 13 plants--4 of these are descendants of the original lavender-colored plant from Frannie! During 2020 when we were pretty much home due to the pandemic, I tried growing plants from cuttings, including 3 kinds of pepperomia, hiaworthia, sword plant, jade plant, and, of course, violets! I thank Frannie for starting me on such an enjoyable path all those years ago!

Recipes

Bonus of two recipes this month in case you still have pumpkin left from your 2021 garden and in case you want to start planning your herb garden for 2022!

PUMPKIN OATMEAL CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES

1 CUP BUTTER

3/4 CUP BROWN SUGAR CREAM THESE 3 INGREDIENTS TOGETHER

3/4 CUP WHITE SUGAR

ADD 1 EGG AND 1 tsp. VANILLA AND MIX WELL.

ADD AND MIX IN SLOWLY 1 CUP PUMPKIN, 1 CUP QUICK OATS, 1

teasp. CINNAMON, 1/4 tsp. CLOVES, 1/4 tsp. BAKING POWDER,

1 teasp. SODA, 2 CUPS FLOUR AND 1 CUP CHOCOLATE CHIPS.

BAKE AT 350 DEGREES FOR ABOUT 13-14 MINUTES.

MAKES ABOUT 2-3 DOZEN.

~ Submitted by Sheri Kisch



Turkey Dressing

~ Submitted by Bess Lovec

This recipe seems untimely, but I include it so we contemplate our summer 2022 herb selections and the harvesting of them next fall. My herbs are usually dried perfectly by Thanksgiving. This approach is much better than heavily salted, pre-packaged herb mixes.

Oven heats at 325.

Remove stems from following and crunch leaves by hand or in a processor:

- sage
- rosemary
- parsley

Next coarsely chop chives.

For a great dressing, use more than you think you need. If herbs still have some moisture in them, you need twice as much as with dried herbs.

A half or full teaspoon of black pepper

Half teaspoon of Sriracha

3-4 beaten eggs, room temperature

Stick of unsalted melted butter

Cup or two of chicken stock, can be from bouillon

Stir everything above.

Then

Add about 2 loaves of chopped, dried bread (I like to mix whole wheat & sourdough)

Chop 3 ribs of celery and a large onion. Sauté with olive oil. Include 2-3 cloves of minced garlic if attendees prefer robust flavors. Add veggies to dressing.

Add a cup or less of dry white wine if mix is dry.

Toss loosely.

OPTIONS to add to dressing: Please don't use all of these at once!

A few chopped anchovies. Don't groan. It's great.

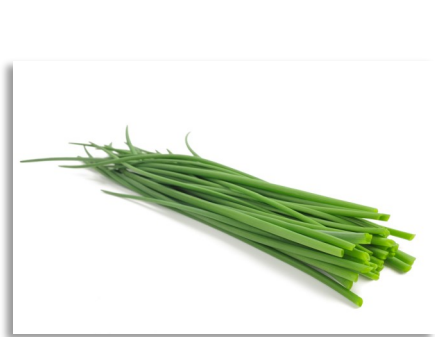
Mushrooms, 8 oz., chopped and lightly sautéed. A personal favorite.

Boiled and chopped organ meats.

Oysters.

Many folks add cooked sausage, but it contains ample fat and salt, so adjust ingredients accordingly.

Bake in casserole dishes about 35 minutes. If you put dressing into the turkey cavity, it's called stuffing, and make sure internal temperature gets to 165 degrees Fahrenheit for safety.



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.



Separate from the Master Gardener program, the Association is our programs 501(c)(3), organized to raise funding for our program's outreach, and to act as an advisory committee, assisting me with the challenges that come with running one of the largest Master Gardener programs in the state.

At this time we are looking for 3 nominees for open board positions, including Vice President, and as Level 3 Master Gardeners I'm offering you the first opportunity to participate as one of our board members.

If you would like to be one of the nominees, or need more information, please contact me or Association President Brian Godfrey (406-606-0184).

Our next meeting will be held Wednesday, January 12th, 5:30 pm, at my office. Please come and see what we are all about and consider serving as a board member. (Access the building using the second glass door...elevator access door...on the west side. If someone isn't there to let you in, give Amy a call at 406-545-8694 and someone will be right down.)

Beneficial Insects

~ Submitted by Ann McKean

This fall, I brought a scorpion pepper plant inside to finish ripening all the peppers it had produced. Shortly after I brought it in, aphids began to appear and rapidly proliferate. Following the principles of IPM and wanting to avoid chemicals, I squished and misted the aphids with water daily, and this definitely helped reduce the damage but still barely kept them at bay. However, I soon began to notice small tan balls scattered around the leaves. Fortunately, unsure but suspecting what they were, I did not squish them. A week or two later, I began to see tiny wasps the size of a flea, and slowly the aphid numbers declined. I have not seen an aphid in the last ten days.



This miracle was performed by the harmless (unless you're an aphid), diminutive native parasitic wasps called *Aphidius colemani*. The 1/8th inch wasps lay their eggs in living aphids and the hatched larvae develop inside the aphids causing them to mummify. The little tan balls I saw were the aphid mummies. When fully developed, the mature adult wasps chew their way out of the mummies and begin hunting more aphids. Eventually the aphid population collapses.

This whole process takes weeks, at the least, to make a difference and thus requires patience and faith (and in my case ongoing squishing and misting) on the part of the plant parents (us), but that patience is rewarded with the joy of watching nature find its balance. Yes, this takes time and is an ongoing dance, but it works well enough for the plants to survive and grow without a single chemical, just the way nature evolved to function. Remember that our definition of perfection may be instant 'perfection', but nature's definition of perfection is balance.

These helpful little critters (and many others) can be easily obtained from Arbico Organics online. The website is also chock full of great info about the beneficial insects they carry and which ones are best for each pest. In Billings, Harvest Tech on Hesper Road just west of 32nd St W also frequently has beneficial insects available in their store.



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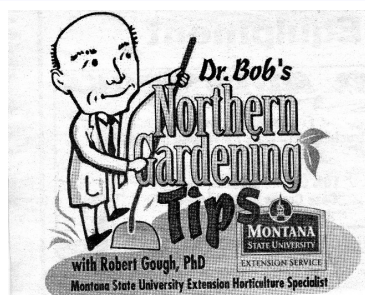


The office remains open 8 am - 5 pm and we will continue to service our community via phone calls, emails, and other appropriate means.

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Question to Dr. Bob: I've read a lot about poisonous landscape plants, but except for the poinsettia, are there any poisonous houseplants?

When it gets too cold to garden outdoors, gardeners begin to garden indoors. Houseplants provide enjoyment during those long, dark winter days. They seem innocent enough with long cascading foliage or brightly covered flowers, but some of them can be deadly. And surprisingly enough, poinsettia is NOT one of them.

Some common houseplants are poisonous to the touch and can be extremely toxic if ingested. Enjoy them but be sure to keep them out of reach of small children. The asparagus fern, weeping fig, spider mums, and gold toother aloe all cause dermatitis. The degree of irritation depends upon the parts of the plant contacted, the time of year, and the sensitivity of the handler.

Boston ivy, dumbcane, several types of Philodendron, and pothos contain oxalates, the same toxin found in rhubarb leaves. Oxalates are irritant salts that cause swelling and pain of the mouth, lips, and tongue as well as destruction of the liver when ingested.

Azalea, Bird of Paradise, Crown of Thorns, narcissus and hyacinth bulbs, and Glacier and Heart ivies all contain other toxic compounds that can damage the stomach, heart, kidney, and other organs when ingested.

For years unfairly maligned poinsettia is no longer considered toxic. That is not to say you can eat it, but please remove it from your planta non gratia list.

I say this not to strike fear into the hearts of indoor gardeners, but please be aware of some of the dangers of our houseplants. Purchase them, enjoy them, and keep them away from children.

Dr. Bob's wisdom lives on.

~ Submitted by Corry Mordeaux

Announcements

Be sure to read the emails from Amy Grandpre to stay up-to-date on Master Gardener events and to learn about volunteer or paid opportunities.

**Best wishes
for a safe and healthy New Year from your newsletter staff.**

**HAPPY NEW YEAR
2022!**



Yellowstone Master Gardener Association

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Important links:

Yellowstone Master Gardener Association Page – <http://www.ycmgamt.com>

YMGA Facebook page – <https://www.facebook.com/ycmga>

YMGA newsletters Blog online: www.yellowstonemastergardenernewsletter.wordpress.com

YMGA Newsletter Submissions ymastergardener@gmail.com

Master Gardener links and resources: <https://mtmastergardener.org/linksandresources/index.html>

Ask An Expert <https://www.msueextension.org/>

Schutter Diagnostic Lab—<https://diagnostics.montana.edu/> (plant diseases, insect damage, and environmental plant problem; how to send samples)

Montana Frost/Freeze/Precipitation Data by County – <https://mtmastergardener.org/linksandresources/frostfreezedata.html>

Yard and Garden MontGuides—<https://store.msueextension.org/Departments/MontGuides-by-Category/AG/Yard-and-Garden.aspx>

Montana State Master Gardener Facebook page- <http://www.facebook.com/MTMastergardener>