

Yellowstone Master Gardeners
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We want hear from you.
 Send submissions for the
 newsletter to [ymastergden-
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 for the next issue

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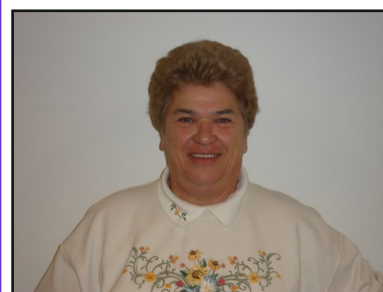
Master Gardener MURRY LYDA



Happy Summer to everyone. I, for one am ready for it! We are going to meet Murry Lyda in this newsletter. Murry has been a Master Gardener since 2002 where he went through the class with 35 people. At that time the class was taught by the late Bob Gough. Murry was raised in Texas and moved to Montana 32 years ago. If you ever hear him do his Texas drawl you will truly know he was raised there. Out of High School Murry worked as a carpenter building houses. After that he went back to school to get a 2 year degree in Electronics. While he worked in this field for a while he decided to get a degree in Bio Chemistry at the University of Texas. After college Murry went to work for DuPont who sent him to Montana to repair chemistry analyzers. After working throughout the whole state of Montana for 2 years he went to work for Saint Vincent Health Center. Currently Murry works in the Bio Medical Department at St Vincent maintaining and repairing medical equipment. When I asked him if he

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Master Gardener GLORIA ERVIN



Gloria Ervin started with the Master Gardeners in 2001 after having neck surgery. She had time to spare and a

bucket list to work on. Her list consisted, among other things, going to Master Gardener classes and learning to do stained glass.

Classes were held at the Courthouse with Dr. Bob Gough as leader. They also had other Master Gardeners and landscapers fill in with their expertise. Her group consisted of about 20 members at that time and she found it very enjoyable. In 2002, the Master Gardeners toured her garden and were able to see her stained glass projects.

Gloria grew up on a farm in Indiana where they grew all their own food. Gloria is married to Mike and they have two children: their son lives in Billings and their daughter lives in Twin Falls, Idaho. During their younger years the children were involved in 4-H and Gloria was a leader. Having a huge garden that would produce all that they needed and provided the children with projects was well worth the work. She preserved most all the produce and that was also part of the 4-H projects.

After a huge hail storm wiped out her long awaited tomato plants, perseverance and ingenuity came through with a plan. Five gallon buckets with drain holes for the tomatoes was the answer. Now she can just take them in the garage when threatening storms appear or when frost is in the forecast. She can now have tomatoes much longer. Since they have a much smaller garden now, Mike made raised beds and Gloria uses square foot gardening.

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YELLOWSTONE COUNTY MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION NEWS

By Elaine Allard

Having a current membership of 40 and still growing, the YCMGA has really started taking root and expanding in its two years of existence. The YCMGA is serving a vital function by helping to secure funds for our many master gardener projects, by presenting enriched gardening classes and outside speakers, and by offering extracurricular outings and social opportunities to the Yellowstone County Master Gardeners.

Master Gardeners may join the Association for annual dues of \$15. In addition to free admission to events put on by the Association, Associates get 10% discounts at Heightened Harvest, Jim's Jungle, Western Ranch Supply (on garden supplies), and Chickadee Tweets (caramels by Master Gardener Merita Murdock). The Board plans to add other membership benefits in the future.

The Board members and several of the Associate members have been busy pursuing grants and funding to help with our numerous and worthy Master Gardener projects and our new garden project at the Yellowstone County Fair Grounds. Recently, YCMGA secured a grant for \$1500 to be used for a Master Gardener project at the Lockwood Boys and Girls Club.

In June, the Association offered a 3-part class: *Growing Roses* presented by Clair Johnson, very knowledgeable rose enthusiast; *Garden Tips* from our Master Gardener garden expert Tom Kress; and *Tree Trimming* advice from our Master Gardener "tree freak" Corry Mordeaux. The cost for the class was \$5, but was offered free to YCMGA Associates.

Upcoming classes being offered by the Association will be *Managing Your Harvest* on August 1st, *Season Extensions* on September 6th, and *Soils* on October 4th. Classes are held at the Extension Office in the Yellowstone County Courthouse. For more information on these upcoming classes go to www.ycmgamt.com or check us out on Facebook (see link below).

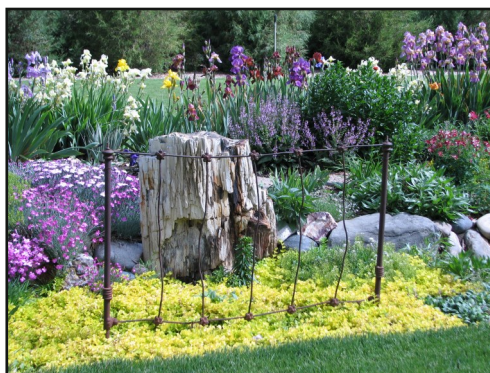


The second annual YCMGA Day at Danwalt Gardens will be Thursday July 24th with the event starting at 11:30 and including a gourmet lunch and garden tour. The cost will be \$20 for YCMGA Associates and \$25 for non-Associates. Plan to attend by contacting Bob Wicks (Bobwix@hotmail.com) by or before July 14th. Advance tickets are needed. Master Gardeners from around the state have been invited to attend.

Check out the YCMGA web site at www.ycmgamt.com for membership information and to keep abreast of what's happening.

YCMGA is now on Facebook. "Like us" and find out what is going on and contribute to our community at <https://www.facebook.com/YCMGA>

Morris Propp Garden Tour 2014



Twenty-four Master Gardeners, family and friends attended the garden tour at Morris and Brenda Propp's estate along the banks of the very close Yellowstone River. The Propps live between Park City and Columbus in view of Young's Point across the river.

If you have never toured this yard and house, you have missed an absolutely gorgeous view and plant selection. Morris can also tell you each plant's common name, Latin name and genus, how it grows and what he does to make everything work so well. He propagates new plants from old and is always working on some new aspect of the beautiful grounds. He has also added

many garden ornaments and treasures. All the rocks for the garden and house were hand-picked for their beauty or uniqueness. Everything has a place and is perfectly groomed. The Propp grounds provide a feast for the eyes and peace for the mind, as you stroll through lovely flower beds, lush lawns, magnificent cottonwoods, and a quiet pond.

At the end of the tour, the group enjoyed a treat of coffee and Brenda's delicious rhubarb cake, made with the Propp's own rhubarb.

Submitted by Sheri Kisch



HARDY KALE by Sheri Kisch

If you didn't get your kale planted this spring, fall is a great time to start. Kale is a cold-hardy and resilient member of the cabbage family and the cool weather of fall makes it sweeter.

Kale grows best in full sun. Enrich your soil with compost and fertilizer before setting out seedlings as kale likes fertile soil to grow fast. You can begin planting 6-8 weeks before the first frost for fall and winter harvest. Plants can be set out 3-5 weeks before the last frost in the spring. Seedlings should be planted at the same depth as in the container, about 18 – 24" apart. Water well and apply liquid fertilizer, about 1-1 1/2" a week. Direct

ing kale in the spring. They need a steady supply of water, crop in the fall, but you do need seed the tiny kale seeds when plant- from velvety green cabbage bugs usually show up when plants

Kale is usually a carefree to be vigilant when holes appear worms. Black and orange harlequin are showing stress from old age. green cabbage aphids. Treat small

Harvest when leaves are

ing from the outside. Avoid picking center. Being hardy, kale lasts into leaves as needed when harvesting. second year without bolting if the

Selections include "Vates", doesn't yellow in cold weather. "Winterbor" resembles "Vates" variety, but it is frost tolerant. "Red Russian", which has red tender leaves and is an early crop.

Looking for antioxidants and vitamins? Kale, like other greens, is loaded with nutrients. One cup chopped kale contains 33 calories, 9% daily calcium, 206% vitamin A, 134% vitamin C and a whopping 684% vitamin K. It is also a source of minerals copper, potassium, iron, manganese and phosphorus.

Kale has many uses. It can be steamed, stir fried, or substituted for spinach in salads (when leaves are young), omelets, casseroles or soups. It is a wonderful addition to smoothies too.



MURRY LYDA ~ continued from Page 1*(Continued from page 1)*

was in charge of the department he said no, but he does have a lot of bosses in the doctors and nurses. Murry has been with Saint Vincent for 27 years and is starting to think about retiring but not any time soon. When I asked him about what he is involved in, Murry gave me a few things. White Tail Run is a community garden in the heights for low income and this is where he likes to help and educate the residents on gardening how- to's. Murry also helps at the Geranium Fest and the Metra Gardens. If you have been involved in the Master Gardeners for very long you know this is the tip of the iceberg as far as what he does. I will go out on a limb and say Murry is involved some way in just about everything the Master Gardeners do. He is always one of the first to volunteer for projects and events. Murry started his interest in gardening with his Grandma. She always had a big garden when he would go to see her. He didn't help a lot because like many of us from that era he was watching TV and listening to rock and roll, and then there were girls... Murry's passion in gardening is vegetables. If you have seen his garden you know it's true. His goal is to grow the perfect European melon in Montana. He tells me that in the last 2 years he has come close. When not in his garden or working Murry likes to hunt, fish, bike, and camp. Murry's wife Robin works at the VA lab drawing and analyzing blood. She also works at the zoo with animal contraception. Murry also has a son and daughter who are both in college at this time. Murry's gardening tip is one that I, for one, need to start doing more of. Murry says to go out and smell



the Irises in your yard today. Murry is a very big reason the Master Gardeners program is just getting bigger and bigger. He is a great educator and always willing to pass on his knowledge to others. Murry was one of the first people I volunteered with when I started in the program and I knew Master Gardeners was for me because of him. Murry, thanks for all you have taught us and all the help you have given. You truly are a Master Gardener. Now, on a personal note this will be my last biography for the news letter. I am getting busier and don't have the time to devote to it like I would like to. Thank you for all the nice comments you have given me for the articles and biographies I have done so far. I still hope to get some articles written and published in the newsletter in the future. I especially want to thank my wife Debbie for being such a patient editor with my writing.

Bob Wicks

The Master Gardener Newsletter editors wish to extend a heartfelt thanks to Bob Wicks for the many great interviews that Bob wrote for the newsletter. Thanks, Bob!

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Making stained glass was also on her list and she spent from 2001 to 2009 putting together windows for the United Methodist Church in Huntley. She has also made windows for churches in Wibaux. It has been very rewarding to see her work each Sunday.

Gloria's other pastimes are leather work (making a saddle!), scrapbooking and pottery, but her favorite thing to do is being outside. For Master Gardeners she has helped out at the Zoo and Montana Fair. We thank you for all your years of service. By Sheri Kisch

EGG FOO YUNG

From Ann Guthals

Eggs
Chopped veggies
Good oil
Soy sauce

Finely chop up several kinds of veggies, such as carrots, celery, water chestnuts, pea pods, broccoli, greens like kale or spinach, onions, beets, kohlrabi, etc. (You may want to grate the carrots to enable them to cook more quickly.) You are limited only by your imagination on what veggies to put in the mix!

Scramble eggs with a little soy sauce. Stir in the veggies. You want enough eggs to hold the veggies together but not be too runny. Heat some good oil in a frying pan over medium heat. Place scoops of the egg/veggie mixture in the pan. Flatten slightly into a pancake shape. Let brown on one side, then flip like a pancake to brown the other side. Serve. Good for any meal of the day.



May the Earth sing to you and the sun rise in your heart

SUMMER GARDEN TIPS

- ♦ As you harvest, keep track of what varieties are doing well for you. This is especially true if you are growing more than one variety of a certain vegetable. Write results down on index cards and store by year in a recipe box. Now you will know exactly what varieties to try new next year, against the best performers you've discovered so far.
- ♦ If you are having problems with tomatoes, squash or other plants, not setting on fruits, you can give them a hand. You can use a water paint brush, pick up pollen from male flowers, and then spread it to female flowers. With squash, you can pick the male flower, take off the petals to expose the pollen, and then rub noses with female flowers. Female squash flowers always have miniature fruits right behind the bloom. Male flowers just have a straight straw-like base, attaching them to the squash plant.
- ♦ For late summer or fall harvests, plant lettuce in shady areas of the yard, like the north side of the house, or in the garden, like in the shade of the corn patch.
- ♦ Remember to water trees and shrubs separately from lawn watering. They have much deeper and larger root systems and need more water than what lawn irrigation provides.
- ♦ Continue removing spent blooms to encourage more blossoms.

For a more complete list of gardening activities –go to Grapevine on Yellowstone County Master Gardener's web site www.co.yellowstone.mt.gov/extension/horticulture/grapevine.asp

MURRY'S GARDEN TIPS—Succession Planting in the Garden

Succession planting occurs when the gardener plants more than one planting of a crop over time or follows one type of vegetable with another over time. Succession gardening works for most garden vegetables in all size gardens, especially vegetables planted from seed.

First, consider how much your family can use. Check the time till maturity for each vegetable. Planting in succession provides a steady supply throughout the season instead of pounds of a vegetable all at once. A person just has to refrain from emptying the whole packet of seeds in the garden on the first day! Plant one section of a given crop, then at a later time (a week or even two) plant another section of the same crop. In addition to staggering the time of maturity for a crop, not planting all at once gives the gardener more time to take out the weeds in the next location for planting. Packets, when opened and closed promptly, will keep. So unless you are headed to the Farmers Market with those pounds of lettuce that you can't eat or give away, successively plant the same amount at intervals of days or weeks.

Another version of succession planting is to plant a second crop of cool-weather vegetables in late summer for fall harvest (such as lettuce, spinach, kale, etc.)

Now if we could just figure out how not to have all the zucchini and tomatoes ready at the same time., we'd be garden heroes!

Rest is not idleness, and to lie sometimes on the grass under the trees on a summer's day, listening to the murmur of water, or watching the clouds float across the sky, is by no means a waste of time. —Sir J. Lubbock



BOOK REVIEWS ~ Zone 4 Magazine

BY Ann Guthals



As a gardener in the Rocky Mountain states, if you haven't already discovered "Zone 4" magazine, you're in for a real treat. Zone 4 is a quarterly gardening magazine started in and run from Bozeman by Dan and Andra Spurr that features articles by local and regional writers on a wide range of topics of interest to gardeners trying to succeed in our challenging environment of short seasons and variable temperatures. There are useful and practical spotlights on gardens and gardeners in Montana, Colorado, Wyoming, or Idaho; features on area restaurants that source local foods; articles on successful gardening in extreme conditions of temperature, soil, and water availability; descriptions of varieties of plants to try; and many other topics of relevance to local gardeners. Even the ads are local! Because it is produced in Montana, there are often gardeners or gardens featured that the reader knows personally. For example, the Spring issue featured the gardens at Northern Plains Resource Council's Home on the Range building on south 27th St. in Billings. By covering

several states, the reader can learn of botanic gardens, inns, restaurants, regional flower and garden shows, and other interesting places and events that one might want to visit.

The magazine is always beautifully produced and a joy to read. Zone 4 is planning on changing its name because you do not have to live only in Zone 4 to benefit from the magazine's information. So watch for this educational and entertaining regional garden magazine under its present name of Zone 4 or, perhaps, under a new name soon!

GERANIUM FEST AT THE ZOO

By Lukas Stevens

May 17th was Geranium Festival hosted at Zoo Montana. This was a free event open to the public in order to raise money for the Zoo's botanical gardens. This happened to be the first volunteer project that I had attended being a new master gardener. Arriving at the gates to the zoo, you are greeted with a bustling crowd and a gauntlet of food carts. The smells alone are enough to entice anyone from the parking lot to continue the journey through the gates. Rows and rows of different vendors lined the entrance pathways to the zoo. In the middle of the large open park area was the main tent, tall and white and filled with the different colors of the famous geraniums. Rows and rows of blooms filled the tent giving off the effect of walking straight onto the canvas of a Van Gogh painting.

The plants were donated by the Yellowstone Boys and Girls Ranch, the Special K Ranch, and Gainan's. The perennial table was a mix of donations for the actual sensory garden at the zoo along with local donators. There was also a table selling vegetable and herb plants. This was a wonderful outreach to the community and sales were able to help boost the awareness of the sensory garden.



URBAN CHICKENS by Ann Guthals

As of October 2012, residents of Billings may legally own a flock of up to 6 hens (no roosters) within the city limits. Billings joined many other cities in Montana and the U.S. in allowing urban citizens to own egg-laying hens. The hens must be confined for their safety and good neighbor relations.

It is quite simple to start your own flock, if you have not already done so. You can build a simple coop—there are many plans available on the Internet—or you can purchase ready-made coops in net. Chickens need feed, oyster shell (for calcium), and grit (to make their gizzards function—they have no teeth), and good water or other bedding. Chicks from local businesses such as Shipton's and Mintana feed, etc.). Sometimes people want to get rid of chickens and these hens may be available at other times of the year than



town or from the Inter-scratch (cracked grains), grit (to make their gizzards function—they have no teeth), and good water or other bedding. Chicks from local businesses such as Shipton's and Mintana feed, etc.). Sometimes people want to get rid of chickens and these hens may be available at other times of the year than

Why would a gardener or other person want to have chickens? They're fun and friendly! They also produce great-tasting, fresh, nutritious eggs that weren't produced by a hen in a factory farm. Owners know exactly what went into feeding the hens. Children find out where eggs actually come from (not the supermarket!) and make friends with these amiable birds. For the gardener, the litter and droppings help boost the compost pile, chickens help with bug control, and they eat kitchen scraps and "weeds" pulled from the garden.



While having a small flock is relatively easy, there can be some challenges along the way. Hens, like other animal companions, require daily care and cannot be taken to boarding when you go on vacation so

you must find someone to care for them when you are away. They live a long time—many years—so this is a long-term commitment once you take the plunge. They do require a

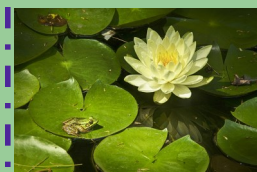


good place to live so you will have to put resources into making them a home before you obtain your chicks. And sometimes getting good straw is very hard to do!

There is a useful group in Billings called Magic City Hens who will re-route your litter and droppings to community gardens if needed and also find homes for unwanted chickens (like the rooster that shows up in the chicks that you didn't plan on). They also offer classes such as winterizing your flock. Check out their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/MagicCityHens>

or call TJ Wierenga at 371-5161.

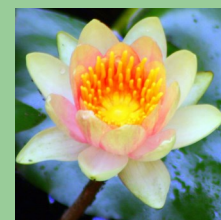
Having a flock of egg-laying hens is a commitment and a bit of work, but when you have that first great breakfast of scrambled eggs fresh from your own backyard flock, it will all be worth it!



2014

POND TOUR

On June 28th the Water Skippers Pond Club held a tour of 15 homes in the Billings and surrounding areas that have backyard ponds and water gardens. The tour was a fundraiser for Zoo-Montana, which has a water garden. Master Gardeners earned volunteer hours by serving as tour guides during the day. The event was well attended.



Level 3 Classes will be in Bozeman August 21 to 23. Attendees must be certified Level 2 Master Gardeners with 30 volunteer hours. Contact Amy for further information (see sidebar).



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

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Here's the Dirt By Donna Canino

- ***Are Bananas a Fruit or an Herb?***

A banana is a fruit which contains seeds. We typically do not see large seeds in our bananas as the seeds have been reduced in size to small black dots because commercial banana plants are sterile. The fruit of wild bananas contain seeds.

Banana plants are not true trees. They are actually an herb (herbaceous) plant because the stem does not contain true woody tissue. So bananas are both a fruit and an herb!



- ***Did you know that there are more microorganisms in a cupful of soil than there are people in the world?***

Not only is soil a living system it also filters out pollutants in underground water as well as storing approximately ten percent of the world's carbon dioxide emissions.

- ***Lettuce may date back more than 6000 years to the ancient Egyptians.***

Lettuce grows as a weed and is a member of the sunflower family, but that has not stopped Americans from eating an average of 30 pounds per year of this easy-to-grow vitamin-infused vegetable.



- ***Tips on Avoiding Ticks***

There are two different groups of ticks: "hard" ticks and "soft" ticks. Soft ticks usually feed on bats and birds while the hard ticks such as the dog tick or deer tick prefer humans and other medium to large mammals.

Hard ticks in the nymph stage are active mid-March to mid-August and can be found on the ground in the leaf litter as well on low vegetation. They usually crawl up the host to feed.

Adult Ticks are present mid March through November with a peak in May and June in Montana. Adult ticks are usually waiting for a host a little higher off the ground on tall grasses and bushes, but usually not on trees.

The best way to avoid a tick bite is to wear light-colored clothing, long socks, closed shoes or boots, long-sleeved shirts, and long pants with the bottom of the legs tucked under socks for more protection. Ticks attach to the host as the host brushes past grass where ticks are waiting. The ticks crawl up the host and can be seen more easily on light-colored clothing. This will enable you to find and remove the tick before it can become embedded in skin. If you are in a heavily wooded area, visually check your clothing often. Bathing within two hours after being out in a wooded area is recommended.

There are also a variety of chemical tick repellents available. Read all labels before deciding whether to use chemical repellants.

Homeowners can reduce the tick population near houses by keeping grass mowed, removing dead leaves and tall weeds, keeping thick brush near lawns trimmed, and storing wood piles away from the home structure.