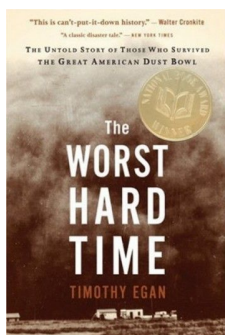


info@minnehahamastergardeners.org

Upcoming Events

- Master
Gardeners Plant
Sale
May 13 2017
9am

- Master
Gardeners
Garden Tour
June 21, 2017
Rain Date: June
22



Book review- The Worst Hard Time by Timothy Egan (2006)

By Donna Haber

Topsoil--crucial for successful agriculture. Now imagine 850 million TONS of topsoil loss in a single year! In his book, *The Worst Hard Time*, Timothy Egan interviews survivors of the American dust bowl which lasted nearly the decade of the 1930's.

Settlers of the grasslands of Nebraska, Kansas, Colorado, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas destroyed the great grasslands that were nature's way of adapting to high wind and low rainfall in these areas. Millions of acres were tilled for more profitable wheat production, and without soil cover during significant drought, there was nothing to hold soil in place which resulted in the "black blizzards." Egan follows several people and families as they recall how they lived and survived those hard times. The book is available at the Siouxland Libraries.

In The Herb Garden

By Priscilla Jurkovich, Master Gardener

The herb section will highlight an herb that can be grown in the South Dakota region.



Anise Hyssop (*Agastache foeniculum*) also known as Lavender Hyssop is a perennial plant from the Lamiaceae (*Labiatae*) or mint family with its square stems and opposite leaves. The leaves and tiny lavender-blue flowers smell and taste of anise (licorice). Honeybees, butterflies and bugs love to pollinate as it flowers from June to September. The flowers are densely packed into showy, cylindrical flower spikes 3-6 inches long. It is a hardy plant in zones 4 to 9 and can be up to 3 feet in height. It thrives in full sun and well- drained soil, but can also do well in many different soil conditions.

You may propagate by root division, cuttings and by seed. As common in the mint family, it self-sows well so you'll have plenty to share with family and friends as they are easy to transplant. Many use this plant to keep deer and rabbits as the aroma keeps them away.

The aromatic leaves and flowers can be used to make herbal



teas or jellies. The seeds can be added to cookies or muffins. The flowers can also be added to potpourris. The leaves can be added to salads, sauces and stews. Due to its properties as an antiseptic, cough reliever, and expectorant, it is commonly used as a medicinal plant. As many plants in the mint family, drinking the tea can have some soothing effects for the stomach. It has a light sedative effect so making tea with the leaves or flower spikes is a good bedtime beverage. The herb is also used to flavor liqueurs and is part of the official formulation of Chartreuse.



What's Bugging You???

A closer look at the insect world and the impact on your life.



By Donna Haber

Gardens are lacking much activity this month, but inside, especially in dark, damp areas, pillbugs or roly poly, may be found all year around. They are accidental intruders indoors and find their way inside by way of cracks and corners of moist

foundations. Armadillidium vulgare are not insects, but are crustaceans related to shrimp and crayfish, except pillbugs spend their entire life on land. They breathe through gill like structures so must be near moisture to survive. Outdoors they play an important part in decomposing dead plant material. They usually die once indoors due to lack of a food source. Pillbugs are only a nuisance--they do not sting, bite, damage furnishings, or transmit disease. Breeding season is late spring. One female may produce 100 offspring. Fertilized eggs stay inside the female for 8-12 weeks, and after hatching they remain inside the female for a few more days. Adult pillbugs can live 1-2 years. Indoor annoyances of pillbugs can be eliminated by controlling their desired environment. Mitigate damp foundations, increase ventilation, decrease humidity, and seal cracks and corners where they may be entering. No chemical control is necessary.

Food For Thought

Not every soil can bear all things. Be practical.- Fortune Cookie

I must have flowers always and always.- Monet

If you are not killing plants, you are not really stretching yourself as a gardener.-

J.C. Raulston

Monarchs and Milkweeds

By, Master Gardener

Vanessa Lambert

The monarch butterfly is a favorite among children and adults because of its colorful wings and its migratory pattern. The monarch butterfly population has declined by up to 90 % in the last 20 years. One of biggest factors in this decline is the rarity of its only caterpillar host plant: milkweed. Without milkweed the monarch can't successfully reproduce. Modern farming techniques used to keep weeds out of fields, loss of habitat and deforestation where the monarchs overwinter are all factors. We can plant milkweed in our gardens to help these beautiful pollinators.



Milkweeds are interesting plants with showy flowers and an interesting history; Schoolchildren collected the pods in WWII to fill life jackets, today we see "syriaca" bed comforters which are milkweed.

Introduction to milkweed plants;

Common milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*), this perennial has large balls of pink or purplish flowers that bloom from June to August. The normal height is 3 to 5 feet but they can reach 9 feet in ditches and gardens. They spread by rhizomes and seed. To prevent seeding, you can pick the seed pods at any time. They are hard to eradicate. After a hard pruning, it regrows tender new leaves and doesn't reach its former height.

Butterflyweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*), blooms in large, flat-topped clusters of red-orange, yellow-orange or bright orange flowers from May to Sept. A smaller plant that reaches 1 to 2 feet in height. These are sold in nurseries. Monarchs will probably choose this type of milkweed as a last resort, they favor the other species more.

Gardening
with the
Masters

Swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*) is known as pink milkweed. This plant ranges from 2 -5 feet in height, needs lots of water and moist to wet soil. You see this plant along the edges of swampy areas, marshes, ponds and wet areas of prairies. The flowers are large blossoms of small rose to purple flowers. They bloom June to October. Leaves are mostly opposite, wider at the stem and narrowing down to the tip. This type of milkweed is not as invasive as other species of milkweeds.

Purple milkweed (*Asclepias purpurascens*) can be found in South Dakota. The flowers are a deep magenta red and bloom May to July. It needs dry soil and grows to reach heights of 2 to 4 feet. The

leaves are opposite. The seed pods are smooth and thin compared to common milkweed. Seeds must be cold stratified in order to plant. They have no underground rhizome. This plant is a slow grower.

Whorled milkweed (*Asclepias verticillata*) is native to our state. The flowers are small, greenish-white flat topped clusters that bloom May to September. The leaves are mostly verticillate to subverticillate. Whorled milkweed can be found in open woods, sandy and clay soils of the prairies. This is a delicate looking plant, very pretty, but not as useful for monarchs as other varieties.

Tropical milkweed (*Asclepias curassavica*) can be found in pastures and along roadsides. This is a perennial in tropical areas, but not South Dakota. It can be started from seed and used as an annual. The flowers are reddish orange and yellow.

The main fact to know about milkweed plant is that it is poisonous to animals if consumed. So if a pet or livestock likes to chew on plant, I would not plant any milkweed. This toxicity is what helps protect the monarchs from predators.

The milkweed gets its name from the milky latex that oozed out when a leaf or stem is broken. If this gets onto your skin and you rub your eyes, it can cause severe eye problems, so be sure to take appropriate precautions when handling milkweed plants.

You can bind the seed pods shut with twist ties or rubber bands in you want to collect the seeds.

Milkweeds attract bumble bees, eastern black swallowtails, fritillaries, hairstreaks, painted lady butterflies, skippers, sulphurs and more for the nectar.



April 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
						Gardening with the Masters Spring Event at 2001 East 8th Street
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
	Master Gardener Meeting 7:00 2001 East 8th Street	Plant early spring crops	Pick a spring bouquet and share with a friend!		Dig transplants for the Master Gardeners May 13 plant sale	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
						Earth Day!
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						