



info@minnehahamastergardeners.org

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.

Chickweed (*Stellaria media*) is a low growing annual wild plant from the Caryophyllaceae (carnation) family. The leaves are oval and opposite with pointed tips that are silky smooth or slightly hairy.



Chickweed flowers are small, white, star shaped with 5 petals that produce flowers throughout the growing season. Each petal is 2-lobed so the flower may appear to have 10 tiny petals. Although a medicinal herb, it can be invasive and can be found in disturbed soil. Chickweed grows well in moist, partially shaded soil, but can tolerate dry and heat. It received its name because chickens and other farm animals love the nutritious plant.

Some use chickweed in the garden to decrease insect damage to other plants. This plant has a lot of health benefits and is full of vitamins, minerals and other essential nutrients. People take chickweed for inflammation, constipation, stomach and bowel problems, blood disorders, asthma and other lung diseases, obesity, a skin condition called psoriasis, rabies, itching, and muscle and joint pain. Chickweed has been used as a diuretic and to relieve conditions such as bladder infections. Chickweed is sometimes applied directly to the skin for skin problems including diaper rash, boils, abscesses, bug bites, acne and ulcers.

In foods, the young chickweed shoots are eaten raw in salads or smoothies or cooked greens in dishes that you would use spinach.

"Bottle of Wine".....Schade Winery


By Debra Brost, Master Gardener Intern

Previously we enjoyed the good company, unique settings and tasty creations of five local wineries. We again thank Strawbale Winery of Renner, Wilde Prairie Winery of Brandon, Tucker's Walk Winery of Garretson, Schade Winery of Volga and Baumberger Vineyard & Winery of Dell Rapids for their hospitality and words of wisdom. We so enjoyed meeting and learning from each of the passionate owners. Hope you enjoyed the trip as much as we did ('cause we REALLY did!!). We now wrap up our travels for this year but we want you to know there are more points along the Southeast South Dakota Winery Trail that remain for you to discover on your own. The two remaining wineries that are currently listed on the trail brochure are:

- • Valiant Vineyards and Buffalo Run Winery: 1500 West Main Street Vermillion SD
- • White Headed Robin Winery: 29123 458th Ave Viborg SD 57070 605-326-5160

We found that South Dakota is coming into its own as a producer of cold-hardy grapes with varieties such as St Pepin, La Crescent, Frontenac, St Croix, Marquette, Valiant, Kay Gray and Marechal Foch. In addition, many of the wineries used local honey, fruit and berries (rhubarb, strawberries, raspberries, chokecherries, cherries, plums, pears, apples and aronia berries) for delightful and healthy accents in the winemaking art. Locally grown, locally produced!

Fall is such a wonderful time of year to take in the harvests around the area and enjoy the clean, crisp air and peaceful, sunny skies. Here are a few more area suggestions you might consider stopping at if your wanderings take you near them:

- • Dakota Falls 719 North Splitrock Blvd Brandon SD 57005 605-321-5532
 - • With the Wind Vineyard & Winery: 10722 Lake Road Rosholt SD 57260 605-537-4780
 - • Five Glass Winery: 502 N 16th St. Beresford SD 57004 605-360-2816
 - • Wide Sky Wines: 21091 1st S Ave Bushnell SD 57276 605-690-1287
 - • Calico Skies Winery: 2368 Able Blvd Inwood IA 51240 712-753-2110
 - • Birdsong Vineyards: 30820 472nd Ave Beresford SD 57004 605-253-2132
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Fruit of the Vine.....

by Bonnie Lynch, Master Gardener

APPLES (*Malus pumila*) are grown in all 50 states and are truly a favorite fruit, with the average person eating 65 apples each year. More than 2,500 varieties are grown in the U.S (7,500 world-wide) and Red Delicious is the most widely grown U.S. variety. A member of the Rose family, they range in size from as small as a cherry to as big as a grapefruit and display colors from red to green to yellow. They are great for eating fresh, using in sauce, pies and apple crisp, can be “bobbed” for (they float since they are 25% air), and are wonderful when made into WINE.

Spring planting is recommended in central and northern areas. Not every apple grows everywhere and each variety has a specific number of days needed for fruit maturity. As a general rule, if a tree is termed hardy, it grows best in Zones 3 to 5. Varieties that do well in South Dakota are: Honeycrisp, Liberty, Haralson, and Keepsake. For best fruiting, an apple tree needs “full sunlight,” which means six or more hours of direct summer sun daily. The best exposure for apples is a north- or east-facing slope. Moderate fertility (apples will tolerate a wide range of soil types), a soil pH of 5.5 to 6.5, good air circulation and good water drainage are needed. Buy disease-resistant, dormant, bare-root, 1 to 2-year-old trees, if possible. After you purchase the tree, protect it from injury, drying out, freezing, or overheating. All apple trees sold have 2 parts: a “rootstock” or foundation (which affects the size and growth rate of the tree) and a “scion” or top portion (which determines the fruit variety). Dwarfs and semi-dwarfs will bear in 3 to 4 years, yielding 1 to 2 bushels per year. Standard-size trees will start to bear in 4 to 8 years, yielding 4 to 5 bushels of apples (a bushel of apples is roughly 42 pounds; a peck of apples is 10.5 pounds). When planting trees on dwarfing and semi-dwarfing rootstocks, be sure the graft union stays at least 1-2 inches above ground so that roots do not emerge from the scion. The graft union (where the scion is attached to the rootstock) can be recognized by the swelling at the junction. Space standard trees 30 to 35 feet apart, semi-dwarfs 20 to 25 feet apart, and dwarf trees 15 to 20 feet apart. [Apple trees](#) are not self-fertile; plant at least one other variety that blooms at the same time within 50 feet (flowering crab apples that bloom at the same time will also pollinate apples). Do not young plant trees near wooded areas or trees. Apple trees can live for more than 100 years.

Before planting, remove all weeds and grass in a 4-foot diameter circle. Dig a hole approximately twice the diameter of the root system and 2 feet deep. Place some of the loose soil back into the hole and loosen the soil on the walls of the planting hole so the roots can easily penetrate the soil. Spread the tree roots on the loose soil, making sure they are not twisted or crowded in the hole. Continue to replace soil around the roots. As you begin to cover the roots, firm the soil to be sure it surrounds the roots and to remove air pockets. It is best not add fertilizer at planting time as the roots can be “burned”. Fill the remainder of the hole with the loose soil, and press the soil down well. Provide adequate water to promote healthy root development.



Since pruning slows a young tree's overall growth and can delay fruiting, do not prune other than removing misplaced, broken, or dead branches initially. Rub off misplaced buds before they grow into misplaced branches. Once an apple tree has filled in and is bearing fruit, it requires regular, moderate pruning. Prune your mature tree when it is dormant. Completely cut away overly vigorous, upright stems (most common high up in the tree). Remove weak twigs (which often hang from the undersides of limbs). The main reasons to prune your apple tree are survival, stimulation, and shaping. Free air flow and penetration by sunlight are vital for a healthy tree.

Soon after fruit-set, remove the smallest fruits or any damaged ones. Most trees experience a natural thinning known as the "June drop", when some of the fruit falls. Thereafter, you should monitor fruit growth and thin or remove crowded, excess fruit (6 to 8" apart is good). This practice evens out production (stimulating flowers for next year's crop), prevents a heavy crop from breaking limbs, and ensures a better-tasting, larger fruit crop of better quality. Many varieties tend to be "alternate bearing"—they set a heavy crop one year and produce a small crop the next. Early removal or thinning of fruit during the heavy year may reduce tendency of alternate bearing. Harvest patiently, at their peak of perfection. Pluck your apples when their background color is no longer green. At this point, the stem should part readily from the branch when the fruit is cupped in the palm of your hand and given a slight twist around, then up. If the apple is overripe and soft, use it for cooking. In an ideal storage environment (humid and cool-- temperatures between 32 and 40 degrees F), apples keep well for about six months. Apples ripen up to 10 times faster when you leave them out than when you refrigerate them.

Apples are prone to pests. Keep [deer](#) at bay with repellents, fencing, or [deer-resistant plants](#); deter [mice](#) and [rabbits](#) with wire-mesh cylinders around the base of the tree. Sprays may be needed for insects like [Japanese beetles](#). The apple maggot can be trapped simply enough by hanging one or two round, softball-size balls, painted red and coated with sticky "Tangle-Trap," from a branch in June through the summer (reapply as necessary).

Fire Blight and Powdery Mildew are common diseases of apples. Fire blight is a contagious disease caused by a bacterium that can kill the entire tree. Powdery mildew is caused by a fungus (gray or white appearance on leaves) and can slow growth and cause deformities. Treatments vary as does the success of such treatments. Reliable identification of pest and disease problems should be followed by sound research and advice as to a plan for treatment. In many cases, problems can be prevented or reduced by proper planting location, good pruning techniques and diligent hygiene (raking up leaves and dropped fruit).

Minnehaha MGs Host First Spring Seminar

By Karin Woltjer Master Gardener

On April 1, Minnehaha Master Gardeners hosted its first ‘Gardening with the Masters’ Spring event at the Sioux Falls Regional Extension Center. The seminar started with morning registration at 8:30 and ended at 3:30 in the afternoon. The general theme was based on gardening for pollinators. May Schaefer was the emcee who led the audience through the event.

Kicking off the presentations was Jon Kieckhefer who is an entomologist, apiarist, honey maker and owner of Kieckhefer Apiaries. He spoke about “Bees, Flowers & Pollination” and said that he is living and playing among the bees. He advised the audience to limit the use of chemicals in the garden and made reference to his lemon orchard (his junkyard graveyard) which shelters bees with the car upholsteries.

Jon estimated that 30% of his lawn is dandelions--not a bad thing because dandelions are the first spring flowers available to the bees. Likewise, sedum in the garden presents bees with the last blooming flowers in the fall. He provided the audience with a plant list for bees and ‘Planning Plants for Bees’ pdf document and suggested that gardeners also plant gallardia and salvia nemorosa.

Vanessa Lambert, a Master Gardener intern who has had experience at the Sertoma Butterfly House, presented the audience with her “Butterflies as Pollinators” powerpoint. She reminded us that $\frac{3}{4}$ of the world’s common food crops require pollination and that birds (and other animals) are even more dependent on fruit and seeds than humans are. She displayed pictures of the many butterflies present in southeastern South Dakota like the Black Swallowtail, Clouded Sulphur, and the migratory Monarch Butterfly.

Vanessa suggested:

- providing dill for caterpillars and emerging swallowtails
- attracting butterflies with rotting fruit like overripe watermelon and rotting bananas
- having a water source (same as for the bees)

An associate SDSU professor, Kent (K.C.) Jensen who specializes in ecology and bird management. presented “Is Your Yard for the Birds?”. Kent recommended that we act like wildlife managers in caring for birds. He mentioned that robins like fruit, hummingbirds don’t pair up and purple martin housing should have its holes plugged up for the winter season.

For attracting birds, Kent gave the audience his top ten flower list:

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|----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. purple coneflower | 6. bee balm |
| 2. zinnia | 7. larkspur |
| 3. sunflower | 8. fuschia |
| 4. black-eyed susan | 9. salvia |
| 5. butterfly bush | 10. coral bells |

After a noon sack lunch, we listened to Cynthia Bergman's talk about the subject of greenscaping with her presentation of "Nature at Work in Your Yard!" Cynthia identified the basics in establishing the basics of healthy soil, planting right for your site, and practicing smart watering. She referenced guides such as Doug Tallamy's book 'Bringing Nature Home', the EPA's GreenScaping brochure and websites BugGuide.net and yanktonhorticulture.web.com. Cynthia is currently a vocational educator with the South Dakota Department of Corrections.


Annette Scheffer who works at Oakridge Nursery exhibited 'Creating a Fairy Garden'. She suggested miniature gardens housed in a little red wagon or wheelbarrow. When planting, Annette recommended a soilless potting mix (not garden top soil which is too heavy) and plants like a mini fern, creeping fig, alpine aster, golden spike moss and maple-leaf begonia.

In general, Annette imagined a coleus as a tree, planting grass seed which grows into a miniature lawn, and using succulents and cactus. As she ended her presentation, Annette opined that a fairy garden is a 'just right' gift for nursing homes and assisted living residents.

The day ended with three Master Gardeners, May Schaefer, Dorothy VerHey and Karin Woltjer forming a 'garden line' panel for audience questions.

Upcoming Event

The Garden Tour for 2017 is happening on June 21st from 3-8 pm. Get your tickets and a map at all Lewis locations for \$10. Rain date June 22nd. The tour will feature gardens in SouthEast Sioux Falls and Brandon.



Spaghetti Squash

By Julie Waltz Master Gardener



Spaghetti squash (*Cucurbita pepo*) is a type of winter squash. It is a warm season vegetable that is harvested and eaten when the rind has hardened and the seeds have matured. When picked ripe it can be stored for winter use. Most varieties are vining so they require a large garden space. There are also bush and semi-vining types which may work well in smaller spaces.

Spaghetti squash is best planted when all danger of frost is over and when the soil has had time to warm. Seeds can also be started indoors and transplanted. Plant seeds one inch deep. Vining types should be planted in hills, then thinned to two or three seedlings. Vining types will need space to grow, 50-100 square feet per hill of squash. Semi-vining types should be planted in hills as well and thinned to two

plants per hill with 8 feet between rows. Bush varieties take the least room and should also be planted with five feet between rows.

The hills should be kept weed free and should be watered if it remains dry in early summer. Once the vines cover the ground, care is minimal as the need for watering and weeding will decrease. Squash are pollinated by bees so be careful with insecticide use.

Harvesting should begin when the squash are a solid, deep color and have a hard rind, generally in September or October. Harvest before the first hard frost. The squash should be cut from the vine with about 2 inches of stem remaining attached. They can be stored at around 50 degrees and will keep longer if they are in a single layer, not touching. Don't store fruit that has been injured or endured a hard frost.

Pest problems include cucumber beetles, which attack both the vines and fruits and squash bugs, which cause problems as the fruit begins to mature in late summer. Insecticides can be used to carefully to control both of these insects.

Squash is a good source of complex carbohydrates and soluble fiber. It is relatively low in calories (about 80 calories per cup, cooked) and is rich in vitamins and minerals.

Spaghetti Squash Varieties include:

Organetti - This is a semi-bush type and produces an orange version of spaghetti which is rich in beta-carotene.

Pasta - This variety produces a yellowish cream fruit with a nice flavor.

Stripetti - This is a hybrid squash that stores well and has a good flavor.

Tivoli - This is a bush type plant with light yellow fruit that weighs 3-4 pounds.

Vegetable spaghetti - This is an open pollinating type with a light yellow, oblong fruit that keeps well.

Spaghetti squash can be baked whole or cut in half. If baking whole, pierce the skin in several places with a long tined fork to prevent the shell from bursting while baking. If baking in halves, place cut side down (consider brushing the interior with olive oil). Bake at 375° F for about 45 minutes. It is done if it gives a bit when squeezed gently.

Night-flowering Catchfly

By Paulette Keller Master Gardener

Night-flowering catchfly is also called sticky cockle or night-flowering silene. It grows from a coarse taproot from which decumbent (horizontal or reclining for most of its length with only the tip ascending). The plant branches out at the upper ends of the braches. There are short branches at the base of the plant that have stiff hairs on the stems. The upper branches have sticky hairs on them. The leaves are arranged opposite of each other on the stems and are egg shaped with the widest area at the base. The leaves also have short, sticky hairs on them. The fruit capsule is ellipsoid (pointed at the top and wider at the base). Each capsule contains lots of seeds which are round to kidney shaped and are greenish brown in color. The flowers can be pink, white or yellow. Each flower has five petals which have a deep cleft on them. They open in the evening and are very fragrant. It blooms from June to September and is an annual. It is found throughout the Great Plains in fields, gardens, waste places, roadsides and disturbed areas. Livestock to not like the taste of it because of the sticky hairs on the stems but ground foraging birds like to eat the seeds. Weeds of the Great Plains/James Stubbendieck, Mitchell Coffin, Lori M. Landholt



https://plants.uaex.edu/weed_id/display_category.aspx?category=Wildflower

