



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.



Horsetail (*Equisetum arvense*) is a perennial herb in the Equisetaceae (horsetail) family. Horsetail does not have flowers or seeds but rather a strobilis (spore cone) at the tip of the stem that produces green colored spores. Horsetail stems are hollow and jointed growing from a rhizome in the sandy, waterlogged, loamy soil. There are fertile and infertile stems. The cone-bearing “fertile” stems sprout in early spring and are 10-20 centimeters long. They wither away once they have given the spores to the wind. The “infertile” stems sprout between April and May and grow up to 2 feet tall. The infertile look like small conifer seedlings during the summer. These stems are harvested in the fall from chemical free environments. The upper 2/3 of the stem may have whorls.

The stems are dried in bunches. Once dry, they are crushed to prepare for natural medicines like tinctures, ointments, creams, tablets and capsules.

For natural medicinal remedies, horsetail has a large concentration of silica. Horsetail has been used to eliminate the body of the toxic metal aluminum (found in vaccines, deodorants) that can damage your brain. Horsetail is an antioxidant, mild diuretic, assists with blood clotting, bone regeneration, heals dental cavities, regenerates tissues, and anti-bacterial. It is also a natural insecticide to get rid of red spiders, mites and aphids.



"Comfort over style is the rule for garden clothes. Plants don't care what (or who) you're wearing." Tovah Martin

Masters In The Garden: Session Two

By Mary Lerssen Master Gardener

Extension Master Gardener Mary Lerssen was a presenter on Vegetable Gardening at our 2018 Spring Event. On August 1 the public was invited to join her in her garden where they toured and shared experiences (good and bad) with vegetables as well as many perennial flowers and fruits. Apricots were picked and enjoyed by many! Master gardeners were on hand to answer questions and give tips on successful vegetable gardening and raising perennial flowers.

Mary had everything from asparagus - apricots - bee balm - celery - cucumbers - horseradish - hops - lilies of all varieties - Saskatoon/June Berries - raspberries - tomatoes to zinnias! The tuberose was a hit with an aroma that filled the evening air. Homemade apple juice was served along with dried apricots & apples and cookies!



Apricots on the tree



Picture of one view of garden



Tuberose

Fall Flowers: Asters

By Vanessa Lambert Master Gardener

Asters are daisy-like perennials with starry-shaped flowers. They bring delightful color to the garden in late summer and autumn when many of your other summer blooms are fading. The Alpine aster blooms in the spring. Asters get their name from the Latin word “aster” meaning star.

Asters may be started by seed or purchased as a potted plant. The aster loves full sun and well-drained soil. They grow 12 to 48 inches high, depending on the variety. There are close to 500 varieties of asters.

Flower colors vary from white, pink, blue to purples. The center is always yellow. That yellow center is actually comprised many tiny flowerets. They make good cut flowers for arrangements. A variety of different colored asters with a sprig or two of baby’s breath makes a quick, eye-appealing arrangement.

Appropriate care of the aster includes watering at the base and not splashing the foliage. Getting water or fertilizer on the leaves encourages powdery mildew. They need little maintenance. Deadheading will help improve the plant’s appearance. Asters are somewhat resistant to insects and diseases. If found, treat early. One insect that is known to bother the aster is the lace bug. They may show up during mid-summer and suck the nutrients from the leaves on the underside. Mulch will help keep weeds down and add to the appearance.

Asters are excellent candidates for container gardens for your deck or porch. They pair well with coneflowers and goldenrod.



Masters In The Garden: Session Three

By Cindy Jungman Master Gardener



The third session of Masters in the Garden was held August 14th in the gardens of Ray and May Schaefer. Dozens of people attended the session “Raised Beds and Native Grasses”. These sessions are sponsored by the Minnehaha County Master Gardeners. They provide an in-depth look at gardens along with a chance to ask questions and learn something new.

It was a great evening of inspiration and garden companionship. Ray and May were eager to share their immaculate beds and answered many questions posed by their guests. Additional master gardeners were on hand to answer the overflow of questions. May’s vegetable gardens were abundant enough to share with those in

attendance.

Ray gave a very informative talk on starting and caring for a native prairie. He gave special attention to the types of grasses featured on their 10 acre prairie. They certainly enjoy the wildlife the prairie brings to their home.

SDSU Extension Master Gardeners are trained by SDSU extension staff to provide their communities with current, research-based consumer horticulture information. Master Gardeners serve a variety of functions including providing education to the public, creating or managing community gardens, answering the public’s gardening questions, and much more.

Visit <http://www.minnehahamastergardeners.org> for announcements on future sessions.



Master Gardener's Field Trip

Hackberry Hollow Woodworks

By Eileen Cypher, volunteer



On August 13th the Master Gardeners were invited to tour Hackberry Hollow by owner Jerry Ward. He led us on a tour covering a wide variety of crops and interests. He markets his crops to local growers and restaurants. Of particular interest were his mushrooms. We saw different varieties growing on wood sourced from his own trees.

Jerry has a large woodworking operation on the farm. He produces distinctive accent pieces and furniture, many featuring a live edge. He has a wealth of knowledge when it comes to growing and caring for trees; and freely shared that knowledge.



Shitake mushroom on maple



The Garden Journal – A Tool You May Have Overlooked

By Nancy Engberg, Hennepin County Master Gardener

Submitted by Cindy Jungman, Master Gardener

In the early spring I walk my tiny lot almost daily to see what is coming up out of the ground. I scrutinize the shrubs and look for buds. I try to remember when the forsythia bloomed last year, wonder why my hydrangea are barely budding, and stare at the rhubarb barely breaking ground. Why is it so slow this year? Then I go to my stash of garden journals, the ones I started keeping in 2006, the first summer after I bought my house.

In those pages filled with plant tags, photos, drawings, and almost illegible writing is my answer. I have dates, the temperatures on those dates, notes about the weather, and which plant came up when. It helps to look back at a similar year and say “oh yeah, this plant was late that year too.”

I also have notes about which plants did well and which kicked the bucket. I have notes and drawings of my vegetable garden and what was planted where. I record bug invasions and funny looking plant diseases. And I make lists, things I need to get done now, things I want to get done this summer, and things I dream of doing when I can afford it.

A garden journal can be a tool as useful as your favorite trowel. While garden journals are sometimes stunning in their beauty and stuffed full of information, they don't have to be in order to be useful. Cryptic jottings in a dime store notebook might be all you want or need.

Picking out a journal and getting started can sometimes be the hardest part. If you're a person who likes to have “just the right thing” go online and sift through the garden journal offerings. Some of them break the journal down into separate sections for designing your garden, a spot for plant lists, and a section for the journaling. I personally think a lot of those types of journals are designed by people who don't actually garden and also include things such as a 20 page section to record all the garden tools and pots you own and barely provide any room to write. I lean toward a blank journal with unlined paper. Once you have your journal picked out, start with the basics; the date, the temperature, is it dry or humid,

windy or still. Then start filling in what's going on in your garden that day or week. What's coming up, what's blooming, what looks like it's dying and what you are doing about it. You can go into as much detail as you want. You can record when you last fertilized your plants, or when you cut something back. It will be helpful in the next couple of months or even next year to have that information. Make

a note of the perennials you plant and where you put them, which might sound silly except some are pretty slow coming up in the spring and if you are like me, you may be looking at a flower bed asking yourself “now where exactly did I plant those balloon flowers?”

I keep my journals in chronological order but beyond that I don’t worry too much about organization. Sometimes plant labels and lists go in the front and sometimes in the back. The drawings and photos are usually interspersed throughout the journal. I like my garden journals to have a pocket, someplace where I can stash things like receipts for plants that can be replaced if they die in the next 12 months. If it doesn’t have a pocket I make one, or I buy a plastic pouch I can put in the back. Once you get journaling you can decide what works for you.

So go ahead, give garden journaling a try, you won’t be sorry. And next winter, when everything outside your window is as white and frozen as the cauliflower you forgot about in the freezer, take out your garden journal and remind yourself that summer is just around the corner.



