



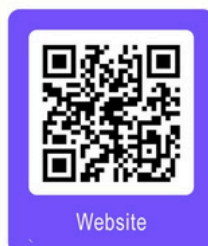
A word about Minnehaha Master Gardeners: We are volunteers trained through the South Dakota State University Extension [Master Gardener Program](#). The mission of MMG is to enhance and supplement community educational efforts of the SDSU Extension Master Gardener Program and to provide research-based education and information on horticulture and environmental stewardship. For more information on becoming a Master Gardener, visit [SDSU Extension Master Gardener volunteer program](#)

Stay in touch with Minnehaha Master Gardeners’ news: [on Facebook](#), [our website](#), or [email us](#).

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Find out more about us!



How Long Do Seeds Last?

Carla Goetsch, Master Gardener



Spring! Time to think about what you are going to plant.

If you are like me, the old saying of “eyes are bigger than your stomach” could be “my cart of garden seeds is bigger than my garden plot.”

If you're out of room to plant all the seeds you purchased in years past, you may be wondering how long they'll keep. How long seeds last depends on the type of seed and how well it is stored.

Most vegetable seeds remain good for about 2 to 3 years. The best way to store seeds is to keep them dry, in an airtight container, and at a cool temperature (33-50 degrees). It is not necessary to store seeds in the freezer.

On average, lasting:

- 6 Years: Radish, Lettuce, Carrots
- 5 Years: Muskmelon, Broccoli, Cabbage, Watermelon, Kohlrabi, Beet, Cucumber.
- 3-4 Years: Pumpkin, Bean, Spinach, Eggplant, Tomato, Kale, Pea, Dill
- 1-2 Years: Sweet Corn, Pepper, Parsley, Onion, Leek

Seeds can be tested for viability to see what percentage of seeds germinate. Place 5 to 10 seeds on a wet paper towel. Roll it up, place it in a sealed plastic bag, and set it in a spot that is around 70 degrees. Mist the paper towel if it is drying out. Watch for germination after about 5 to 10 days (the seed packet will indicate days to germination). If 70% or more of the seeds germinate, the seeds should be fine to use. If fewer than 70% germinate, it would be better to buy new seeds.

What Should You Do With Expired Seeds?

Debi Ulrey-Crosby, Master Gardener

Most seeds last several years if stored properly, while other seeds last only 1 to 2 years. Should you toss them, or take a chance and plant them? Before you toss them, try pre-germinating them to see how many germinate, then plant seedlings that sprout.

Pre-germination is easy and inexpensive. Seeds pre-germinated often sprout within 24 to 48 hours, which is much faster than the typical 7 to 14 days (or longer) listed on most seed packets. Seeds need moisture, warmth, oxygen, and time to germinate. This method works for most vegetables, flowers, and herb seeds, new or expired.

Gather your supplies :

- Old seeds of your choice
- Paper towels or coffee filters
- Plastic baggies
- Spray bottle filled with water
- Label material (seed name and date started)
- Heat mat optional
- Soil (potting mix or seed starter mix) and plant containers for new seedlings



Follow these simple instructions:

- Place seeds on a folded, damp paper towel. If seeds have a hard coat, they might need to soak in water for 12 to 24 hours to soften the seed coat prior to putting them on moist paper towels.
- Put the folded paper towel into a plastic bag, leaving a small opening for air.
- Label your seeds
- Place in a warm area (heat mat optional) away from direct light (some seeds require light to germinate, so be sure to check your seeds' requirements).
- Check daily for moisture and germinated seedlings.
- Gently separate the germinated seedling, tearing off part of the wet paper towel if necessary. The seedling will continue to grow through the paper towel.
- Plant germinated seeds ASAP to prevent damage to the new root (radicle).
- Place newly planted seedlings in a warm, well-lit area for best growth.

The Spruce

<https://www.thespruce.com/how-to-germinate-seeds-8600870>

Tri River Area Extension

<https://tra.extension.colostate.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/9/2021/09/Plants-in-a-Bag.pdf>

Oklahoma State University Extension

<https://extension.okstate.edu/fact-sheets/print-publications/hla/plants-in-the-classroom-hla-6506-a.pdf>



Agave as Houseplants?

Carla Goetsch, Master Gardener

Houseplants experience a lot of trends in décor, and thus what is easily available in the retail market.

Succulents have been popular for years, but an upcoming trend within the classification is agave. Agave may be best known as a very large plant grown in Central American fields and harvested to make tequila or a sweet syrup.

There are around 450 species of this desert plant that can grow up to 20 feet tall and 10 feet wide, depending on the species. Most grow as a perennial in zones 9-11 and live up to 25 years. It only flowers once and then dies.

Because of the wide variety of colors and textures, agave plants are becoming popular houseplants.



Agave Care: As a desert plant, they need well-drained, rocky or sandy soil. They require full sun with slightly acidic soil. Water only once the soil is dry. Fertilization is usually not necessary, and they do not like high humidity. The most common way to propagate agave is to grow the pups that grow along the parent plant. Agave has very few pests. They are toxic to pets and humans, but your pet will likely leave them alone since many agaves have thorns or spikes.



In this photograph:

Direct light:

- Spider Plant: *Chlorophytum comosum*
- Peace Lily: *Spathiphyllum*

Indirect medium light:

- Various Snake plants: *Dracaena*
- Baby Rubber Plant: *Peperomia obtusifolia*
- Philodendrons and Pothos

Houseplant Series: Turning Good Intentions into Success... Getting Started

Pam Conklin, Master Gardener

Success with houseplants isn't about luck or having a "green thumb." It's also not as difficult as it may seem. Thriving plants begin with a little basic knowledge and an honest assessment of your space and your habits.

Let's start by taking a walk through your space: note the light, temperature, and humidity. Does your space receive bright, direct sun or mostly indirect light? Are grow lights needed? Are there drafts from windows or vents? Is the air dry, especially in winter? These conditions will determine which plants are most likely to succeed in your home.

Now, take a moment to assess your own tolerance for care. How much time do you realistically have to spend watering, monitoring, and adjusting conditions? Your answers will help guide not only how many plants you bring home, but also which types you choose. Some plants thrive on occasional attention, while others require more consistent care.

One of the most effective ways to simplify plant care is to group plants by similar needs. For example, the photo shows a large east-facing window that allows a few hours of direct sunlight, then stays bright, but moving away from the window, the light quickly changes. I know this plant caregiver personally (it's me!). The plants shown here are mostly hands-off!

In this series, we'll explore houseplants based on shared environmental conditions to make it easier to care for them and design a cohesive indoor landscape.

Always Start With Healthy Plants

- Where you buy your plants matters. Look for reputable garden centers or stores that maintain healthy, well-cared-for stock.

Article continued on page 7

Pruning Sedum in Spring: A Guide To Helping Your Sedum Thrive

Candy Van Dam, Master Gardener

As the days grow longer and spring arrives, it's time to turn your attention to your sedum plants. These hardy, drought-tolerant succulents are a popular choice for gardens, rock gardens, and containers, but they require some seasonal maintenance to keep them looking their best. One of the most important tasks is pruning your sedum in the spring.

Pruning sedum helps keep these hardy succulents looking their best throughout the growing season. It encourages flowering and growth, and it removes unsightly winter damage.

Why Prune Sedum in Spring?

1. Sedum plants can become leggy and overgrown over time, especially after winter. Pruning them in early spring serves several important purposes:
2. Encourages Bushier Growth — Pruning sedum in spring helps the plants grow in a more compact, bushy habit rather than becoming tall and leggy over time. The pruning stimulates the plant to produce more side shoots and lateral growth, resulting in a fuller, more attractive appearance.
3. Removes Dead or Damaged Growth — Winter weather can take a toll on sedum, causing some leaves and stems to die back. Spring pruning lets you remove unsightly dead or damaged growth, keeping the plant looking fresh and healthy.
4. Maintains Plant Shape and Size — Pruning sedum in spring helps control its size and shape. This is especially important for keeping sedum in containers or small garden spaces from getting too large and unruly.
5. Rejuvenates the Plant — Regular spring pruning can help rejuvenate older sedum plants, stimulating new growth and preventing the plants from becoming too woody or overgrown over time.



Hylothelephim 'Autumn Joy,'
McCroory Gardens, 2022

When to Prune Sedum

The best time to prune sedum is in early to mid-spring, just as new growth is beginning to emerge. This is typically around March or April. Avoid pruning in the heat of summer or during the dormant winter months.

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Houseplant Series continued from page 5

Before purchasing, take a closer look. Gently move the top layer of soil and inspect the plant thoroughly. Check the undersides and tops of leaves, along stems, and near the soil line. You're looking for signs of pests, disease, rot, or stress. Be cautious of plants that appear overgrown in their containers or have been very recently transplanted, as some plants may go into shock when disturbed.

Finally, read plant labels or shelf descriptions. These often provide helpful guidance on light,

water, and general care requirements—information that can help you match the plant to your space.

In the next six articles, we'll explore groups of plants that thrive under similar conditions: from low-light to bright-light spaces, and from moisture-loving tropical conditions to much drier conditions. Together, these plants will help you build a thriving indoor landscape, one well-matched grouping at a time.

Pruning Sedum continued from page 6

How to Prune Sedum

1. Pruning sedum is a straightforward process:
2. Use clean, sharp pruning shears or scissors to make your cuts.
3. Trim back each stem
4. Remove any dead, damaged, or excessively long stems entirely.
5. Discard the pruned material to prevent the spread of any diseases.

After pruning, give your sedum plants a balanced, water-soluble fertilizer to help them recover and thrive.

With just a bit of spring pruning, you can keep your sedum looking its best all season long. Enjoy the vibrant flowers and lush, compact growth that proper maintenance provides.

Here come the buds!

Before pruning



Minnehaha Master Gardeners Donate to City of Garretson for New Native Plant Display Garden

Cindy Jungman, Master Gardener

The Minnehaha Master Gardeners are proud to announce a donation to the City of Garretson Park Board, dedicated to the purchase of native plants for the newly planned Native Plant Display Garden at the entrance of Devils Gulch Park.

The new garden will showcase a diverse range of native plant species, offering both educational opportunities and enhanced natural beauty for residents and visitors alike. Shown is MMG president Kathy Buseman presenting a check to Colleen Collier, Minnehaha Master Gardener and City of Garretson Park Board member.



Donation supports purchase of native plants for Devils Gulch Park entrance

GARRETSON GAZETTE \$2

THE WEEKLY NEWS OF GARRETSON, SOUTH DAKOTA

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Minnehaha Master Gardeners Donate to City of Garretson for New Native Plant Display Garden

Donation Supports Purchase of Native Plants for Devils Gulch Park Entrance



GARRETSON, SD – March 2, 2026 – The Minnehaha Master Gardeners are proud to announce a generous donation to the City of Garretson Park Board, dedicated to the purchase of native plants for the newly planned Native Plant Display Garden at the entrance of Devils Gulch Park.

The new garden will showcase a diverse range of native plant species, offering both educational opportunities and enhanced natural beauty for residents and visitors alike.

The City of Garretson wishes to thank the Minnehaha Master Gardeners for their generosity and support. An educational native garden has been a long-standing goal for the Parks Advisory Committee, which is charged by the city council with the beautification and enhancement of the city's parks. In past years, they have created several native plant areas throughout the parks, led an initiative on placing day use areas in Split Rock Park, and have advised the city on the best areas to

and to provide research-based education and information on horticulture and environmental stewardship."

Native Plant Gardening

Native gardens are a great benefit to local ecosystems! Whether it's supporting pollinators or reducing lawn maintenance, native gardening is on the rise.

Native plants provide habitats and food for local insects and wildlife.

Save the Date For the MMG Plant Sale!

Cindy Jungman, Master Gardener

Mark your calendars!

The 2026 Annual Minnehaha Master Gardeners Plant Sale is Saturday May 9. Start your planting season with quality plants grown by Minnehaha Master Gardeners.

This plant sale will include vegetables, annuals, perennials, pollinators, shrubs and vines.

Doors open at 9:00AM and close when plants sell out. Come early for best selection!

