garden

Press&Dakotan

Plant Exchange Changing Nirvana Landscape

BY BRENDA K JOHNSON P&D Correspondent

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"Plant Exchange" appears each Friday in February on the Garden page.

Some landscapes require more than toil of labor for improvements.

Q: How can you impact the landscape in a place where time stands still?

A: Cabin acreages are sometimes like that: a place where you are suspended from the world. Linda Stephenson, owner of a women and children apparel store, Linda's Angel Crossing, in Yankton is its creative buyer and customer consultant. Progress occurs with her hands-on management in the store.

"At the farm," she calls it — all is different. Stephenson has just returned from a trip abroad. 'I went straight to the farm before going home. Daryl (her husband) used to come here when the children were young, but now we all (including grown children and grandchildren, youth, friends and others) come here. It's unstructured. It's big enough for all of us.

Henry, the 20-year-old donkey, rules his grazing area. Horses and goats have another area.

Goats eat weeds," Stephenson said.

The animals rotate pastures. Daryl and son Russ raise and show rabbits which are also housed on the farm.

Some of them are top in the nation." Linda said.

Linda and Daryl both make decisions about the vegetable garden in back.

In front of the house is a spacious county yard with flowerbeds and other plantings; some as old as the 37 years the Stephensons have owned the

place. "We won that tree in a rabbit show." A mature tree lies blown over from some storm, possibly 10 years ago. The trunk is almost horizontal to the ground. "It kept on living, so we left it. It reminds me of a tree where I grew up in Iowa.

Stephenson describes the farm as peaceful and a place that requires patience. "Ŵe're both drawn out here. I don't have the energy to do things over and over. County estate? Ain't going to hap-



Linda Stephenson's pets with a purpose like this goat, tackle weeds in their pasture.

pen! Too many people with their own plans.'

In a yard area to the side of the house is a ring of 12 tree trunk sections about the height to sit on, carefully measured and cut and equally spaced apart. Nearby are flowers.

"David (adult grandson) did this. He cut down a tree in town and made this ring of tree sections to represent all my siblings," Linda says.

On an acreage that has changed slowly in nearly four decades, David has made a difference. It started with an inheritance that he used after his great grandfather passed away: a chain-

A tree grove came with the property, probably planted in the 1950s. Stephenson remembers when a sister visited from Alaska several years ago and they tackled removing some dead and damaged trees in the tree grove, but not much has happened there in recent years.

Grandson David Stephenson now has obtained both grandparents' and others' blessings, and has begun landscaping the prop-

erty. "This past year, I've taken down about twenty-five trees out of this



Great grandfather's chainsaw and grandson David Stephenson make a difference at the family acreage.

lot and about ten in the other grove," David says. He has culled trees that needed to be removed, cut them up and hauled them away. "It's exercise. It keeps me busy; it's really not so much work. This place is quiet and peaceful."

You move these trees out so something else will grow," David continues.

Henry the donkey likes the pas-

ture that now has more sunlight and grows different plants. Stephenson is pleased that her grandson tackled this big job and the radiology program.

Horticulture Magazine.

• Want to report Spring? Project BudBurst is a citizen science national effort co-sponsored by Chicago Botanic Garden, to find changes in environmental information in regions of the country. While data has only been collected since 2007, it appears that in the Chicago area, when compared with 40 years before, that spring may arrive earlier. The project focus is on lilacs, forsythia and chokecherry common in our region, among other plants. Results from 2011 are available and reporting for 2012 is underway for areas of the country. Educational materials are available at the site. Put SD on the map! http://neoninc.org/budburst.



PHOTO: BRENDA K. JOHNSON "Automatic dead-headers," Jack observes. He says the stem section that's just below the spent flower seed head dies and falls off.

Who Cares **About Plants May Be Surprising**

BY BRENDA K JOHNSON P&D Correspondent

Q: What is the perfect low-maintenance flower?

A: Jack Nielsen, owner and manager of JoDean's Steakhouse & Lounge in Yankton, has been collecting seed and stor-ing and planting them each spring in front of his business

for the past five years. "Cars hit the plant containers and push them into the building. Pop cans, toothpicks and gum fall into the plant containers," Jack says. Yet he likes how the plants look out front of his business so much that he takes time to gather seed, plant, water and collect seed for next year.

"A good customer brought in empty large plastic mineral pots that are used with cattle. Pots come in colors." Jack drills holes near the base of the pots and then adds large gravel for drainage so water will flow out. 'You can tell you've watered

enough when water comes out the bottom."

"I wanted something to add to the front of the building," Jack says. (Plants contribute to the landscape, but has he considered plastic ones that require no maintenance for this exposed sun, wind and heat-reflecting setting?) Then he continues, "I like to watch things grow...see trees grow. But I'm as glad as the next, when fall comes. "I filled the containers with Wal-Mart potting soil and added some Miracle-Gro fertilizer that lasts for three months. Seed? I collected seeds last August or September. They're sealed in envelopes that I thumbtack on the wall. I sprinkle the seeds into the soil about Mother's Day after the last frost.' In spring when many yards are displaying half-grown greenhouse petunias, Jack's black soil planters line the front of his building. Then seeds begin to germinate. "Some people tell me I should pull those little weeds and get some real plants," he says.

a lot about these plants. "When I grew the first package of mixed variety seeds, I picked out seeds from the plants that grew best, and had the bright color I like. That's what's growing here now, each year. I tried putting sunflowers in with them for height, but the sunflower leaves got eaten by insects. Nothing bothers these flowers. Never spray. If you forget to water them, you just soak the he** out of them and they pop back up.

"There's no dead-heading to these plants. They're automatic dead-headers. The stem below the flower just dries up and the old flower falls off. They bloom until frost and then you pull them out.

"Plants I grow have to be easy and cheap and be able to save seed. My mother and friends garden for me at home. In spring when it's still cool, these flowers close up at night and bend over like this." He nods the flower.

"Butterflies and big yellow and black striped bumble bees love these flowers. These plants are durable." The afternoon sun is reflecting off the cement parking lot and off the windows off the building. "You have to water daily when it's hot." Growing these plants is still a lot of effort. 'To me, in the restaurant business, if you're clean outside, it draws people in," Jack says. "Like there by the Frying Pan Restaurant at 21st and Broadway corner. Night and day, people are drawn to pretty things. I have nine containers here now. I plan to add three more next year." He didn't change his mind when hail damage ended his plant season in August. Jack is unsure of the name of the plants. "Someone told me they are called tickseed." If that is so, they are likely a species of Coreopsis, which happens to have the characteristics that Jack has already learned. But the name isn't what's important here.

Dibbles & Bits:

 Collecting seed-starting containers? Recycled Kuerig coffee plastic cups or other such containers may work to grow single trans-

 Public-Choice American Garden Award for last season included 'SunPatien Variegated Spreading White.' These white impatien annuals grow in sun or shard until frost and have variegated cream and green leaves. See other past winners chosen by the public at www.americangardenaward.org

has made so much headway. David navigates among all the stakeholders. David gets things done. He has ordered shrubs and trees from Arbor Day Foundation. Now he is enrolled at Mount Marty College in

lants. Add hole in the bottom for water drainage.

• Pondering a fresh start for flowerbed soil? For tainted or unproductive soil, a quick fix is a raised-bed garden, with or without edges of fieldstone, pavers or wood, and with new topsoil and added compost. To amend soil with established plants, add a layer of three inches of compost and dig it in if possible. See February 2012 Garden Gate magazine in the Yankton Community Library for more tips.

Dismayed, the first action step

after seeing hail-damaged plants

this past summer might have

different path.

been to throw the plants away.

Barb Rhode used patience and a

Q: How did you care for

ates B-Dazzled Downtown hair

She rotates some of her plants

shop for decoration. But her

prize orchid, a gift from her

years ago, is always kept at

home. The orchid was set to

bloom a second time this year.

When it hailed on Aug. 18,

Barb was at work. "I thought of

the plants being outside. My or-

chid had three stems and nine

hail damage but windows were

not broken. "I thought that the

its own thing and waited six

close to where the leaves

leaves.

and bumped.'

orchid was in shock, so I let it do

weeks before I cut the stems off,

emerge. Leaves were beat up and

tattered. I cut one off." She knew

plant so she left several damaged

"I'm patient, and look, now

that leaves made food for the

(three months later), I have a

new leaf that's 3 three inches

long. I think the plant is healthy,

The orchid houseplant was

reason. "All my houseplants, I set

outside by about the first of June.

outdoors in the first place for a

They almost double in size."

Plants looked robust and re-

ceived the moisture, air move-

even with some leaves bruised

Her house roof and siding had

blooms. I babied it so much."

that she grows at home into the

daughter that she received three

salon on Third Street in Yankton.

A: Barb Rohde owns and oper-

your hail-damaged orchid?

• Red twig dogwoods display red stems in winter. If the shrub is mature and has lost the vibrant color, it may be because not enough bright new growth is evident. If the plant has about a third of old stems cut off each year at the end of winter near the base, the plant will be fuller and will appear bright with new growth. Techniques for pollarding and coppicing stems of related plants at different heights for affect are discussed in January/February

Feb. Plant Tips

Jan Byrkeland is Manager of Hy-Vee Floral in Hy-Vee Food Store, 2100 Broadway Ave. in Yankton. (605) 665-0662 Byrkeland shares tips about cyclamen, a popular flowering potted plant, to keep it blooming after

Valentines Day. Byrkeland says that cycla-men is a member of the Primrose family, and is native to eastern Mediterranean regions and Western Asia. Cyclamen have five-petaled blooms atop slender leafless stems that last three to five weeks. Peak season for cyclamen is October -March. She shares these care

 Keep the plant moderately moist, but not soaked, at all

ment, but not direct in sunlight.

surroundings; 60-65 degree daytime temperatures and 50-60 degree temperatures at night.

midity. (One alternative is to set plants that require extra humidity in a tray on pebbles contain-ing scant water.)

You can tell Jack has learned

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plant. ment and natural fluctuating temperatures outdoors. They were positioned against the north side of the garage with a roof overhang for wind and direct sun protection.

Using Patience And A Different Path

About Labor Day each year, Rohde begins the process of moving plants indoors. "I water the plants and remove dead leaves but don't transplant. Plants go into the garage for 3-5 days with less air moisture and reduced light. I spray the soil and the plants, top to bottom, with Schultz Houseplant and Garden Insect Killer (contains pyrethrin)." She gets it from Ace Hardware in Yankton.

"If I by a plant or someone gives me one, I spray it (with this product) and save myself a lot of headache. I did have a (tropical) hibiscus that had insects and finally had to get rid of it."

Önce the plants were back in the house, Rohde stated her care pattern: "My routine is watering once a week. I put plants in the kitchen sink. Sometimes I wet the

leaves. I go back and water three times so the water goes in slowly." She pointed out that with rapid flow of water, the water could run down the side of the roots. "I check the soil for moisture with a chopstick. I add more water until water runs out

the bottom of the pot.' "I fertilize later in the fall, after the plants are adjusted to the indoors again. I'm careful so plants acclimate to conditions so there is no shock.

Rohde had other houseplants damaged by hail. "They're all coming back. I like the moisture and oxygen that plants give off indoors.

A sign of proper care for orchids was recurring blooms. 'The first year when my daughter gave me the orchid, it came with blooms. Since then its blooms twice a year or in nine months. Now I hope I'll have blooms by Easter. The hail caught us all offguard.

Cyclamen require high hu-

