

Plant Exchange

Plants That Make You Turn Your Head

Plant Exchange appears each Friday in February and then returns to first Friday in March.

Share tips from your plant experience, give us a tour of your plant site, or send your questions related to outdoor or in-door plants to news@yankton.net. Attn: Brenda Johnson or write to P&D, 319 Walnut St, Yankton, SD 57078, Attn: Brenda Johnson.

BY BRENDA K JOHNSON
P&D Correspondent

Is there a spot of plants that you admire on drive by time after time? This business has a sign with a flowerbed beneath it. In this small bed, carefully selected flowers bloom in turn throughout the growing season.

Q: How does your passion for flowers spill into your work?

A: “We’ve been in business for twenty years,” said Gaylene McMenamy. She and her husband own Hilltop Storage Rentals on 435th Ave. north of the Lewis & Clark Marina west of Yankton. It’s a hot August afternoon as we sit on her deck in the shade of airy locust trees on the edge of deep woods.

When their storage facility was being built, McMenamys thought about sowing grass for the cleared gully between the building and their house. A tradesman encouraged them to wait. Now the gully is filled with cottonwoods that have grown there naturally.

“I can’t imagine not having trees when it’s this hot for keeping the deck cool. It would be too hot to sit here without trees,” she said.

Spots of color and plantings decorate the yard. Their storage business sign is prominent at the edge of their front yard. Throughout the growing season something is in bloom in this flowerbed beneath the sign. Colors change in sequence from spring through fall. She complements perennials with splashes of annuals.

“There (now) I’ve got ‘Black Jack’ sedum. They are upright, 18-24 inches tall, and have dark purple foliage.” She likes the contrast with other foliage. “I have some green sedum mixed with the ‘Black Jack’ sedum in the flower bed but it has a tendency to overtake the ‘Black Jack’.”

“Mums (in the bed) are yellow and red-violet. Yellow are the prettiest,” she said.

Finding best growing locations for plants can be a challenge. “Years ago I planted this yellow mum on the south side of the house. I was busy and had little time to care for the mum, but south of the house it survived with minimal care for many years,” she said. Her husband suggested that it be moved and transplanted it on the west side of the house. “It grew like crazy, but was too shaded. Out by the



PHOTO: BRENDA K. JOHNSON

Hot pink petunias and airy ‘Diamond Frost’ filler annuals are simple, eye-catching, and complement the front entrance area.

storage sign it has done beautifully. Now there are four clumps. Sometimes you find the right spot for a plant.” She remarked that this season her mums bloomed in June and then again later, when usually they bloom once in early October.

“I also have a ‘Wonder of Staffa’ blue aster in the sign bed. I’ve tried many asters and this one does well here. Other asters I have tried were afflicted with aster wilt. This one is drought-tolerant and blooms about two months,” she said.

“I use Liquid Fence against the deer,” McMenamy said. “Deer live (around) here. My husband used to fill the birdbath with water twice a day for the birds. However, the deer were drinking more water from the birdbath than the birds, so now he fills an extra tub with water for the deer to drink. He tries to provide water for the birds and other wildlife.”

“I apply the Liquid Fence once a week (on the plants). (Sprayed with repellent) sometimes deer try a plant and then spit it out. The deer eat the mulberries from our mulberry trees. I think they fill up on the mulberries, so they are less likely to eat on my flowers. We don’t have trouble with rabbits, partly because we have cats.”

“I use a groundcover dianthus under the sign. It blooms pink in the spring. Perennials are in the middle of the bed and annuals around the outside,” she said. “Dark pink, light pink and white vinca are in bloom. “Plants there are hardy and drought-tolerant. I have to add mulch to the bed every year.”

The flowerbed reflects the care it receives. “I just thought it was a nice place for a flowerbed.

Of course when people notice the flowers, I hope they see the sign.”

“I love plants,” she said. “They’re my passion and hobby. I love Nature and flowers and experiment with new plants every year. Some I plant from experience that work well and are hardy. My husband likes plants and he has certain ones he wants me to plant every year. I’m glad others enjoy flowers as much as I do. I think the love of the land is genetic. My grandmother loved flowers,” McMenamy concludes.

One landscaping trend is to plant trees, shrubs, and perennials in a yard and then each growing season to add temporary plants in portable containers for color. Colors may be rotated to other areas later in the season. Plants that thrive for part of the season, such as pansies in early spring, may be replaced with heat-tolerant vinca later.

Q: How do you use container plants to decorate your yard?

A: “I like planting in pots,” said Evelyn Schindler of Yankton. “You can get creative putting different plants together. You can have different pots out front every year or get ones you like and stick to a good combination.” She places pots around the yard to bring color to that location. In some areas, she screens with potted plants. In other areas, she draws the eye away from an eyesore with a focal point of color. By a blank garage wall she plants hostas and places taller copper yard art and a container of hot pink petunias. Containers personalize her yard with leaf and flower shape, texture, and color. She uses Miracle-Gro potting soil that contains fertil-



PHOTO: BRENDA K. JOHNSON

Evelyn Schindler of Yankton positions the spiked cordyline plants to attract the eye while adding structure to the porch area. She overwinters these container plants that are now about eight years old.

izer for the containers. Her pots have holes in the bottom for drainage.

Evelyn plants perennials as well as annuals in her containers. “I have a Mexican fire bush in a container,” she said. It’s a mounded green plant that turns red in the fall. “I take cuttings every year. It is one way to keep an out-of-zone plant year to year when it won’t survive in a container outside or planted outdoors over winter. The plant is now fourteen years old and is maintained in its compact vegetative size. Some plants become oversized and unattractive if they are just overwintered each year without rejuvenation through cuttings, pruning, or re-potting.

“I like ‘Fire Profusion’ zinnias and lavender vincas to pair with the Mexican fire bush,” she said.

FRONT ENTRANCE CONTAINERS

Near her front entrance Evelyn clusters plants in bold red, white, and blue theme to go with a flag lighted at night nearby. At this time, other areas of the front yard compliment the primary colors at the entrance. Evelyn chooses red and white pentas and red petunias for the full sun and heat by her front door. “I like lotus vine as a delicate filler plant and have tried ‘Snow Princess’ alyssum. ‘Diamond Frost’ works well as a filler, or by itself in a container.

She says that the spiked cordylines in pots on the porch are about eight years old. “I keep them in a sunroom at just above freezing in winter.” The three cordylines are taller than head height and the knife-shaped burgundy leaves draw attention. Schindlers moved here from Ne-ligh Nebraska and display their Husker sign nearby. Other plants in the front entrance area of the yard include foxtail fern and a fine leaf buckthorn. Deep blue plant pots add color.

The front porch container plants have vivid color, flag theme, and variable leaf texture and shape. They are positioned at multiple heights. The entrance space is airy and casual as visitors approach. Pots are grouped informally. Plants on the porch are visually proportional to each other. Carefully selected plants add spaciousness to the porch.

BACKYARD CONTAINERS

Evelyn uses containers in her backyard to add bold color. With some areas of full sun and some with degrees of shade, she selects plants for light requirements. The copper washtub is slightly elevated and is filled with pink petunias, repeating the pink of Mandevilla vines in another container. Raising the height of a container makes it stand out among other plantings. She groups her containers by water needs as well as by need for color in a spot. Keeping containers together that require more water saves time.

Evelyn is a fan of uniquely shaped leaves and the ‘Popcorn Cassia’ container plant, with herbs at its base, is the star of its spot. One of the economical features of container plants is that colors or theme of a spot can be easily changed and the plants re-used in another location. Evelyn creatively uses containers to accent her theme and to add bold color around the yard. For more on plant containers in the landscape: The Container Gardener’s Bible by Joanna K Harrison and Miranda Smith, Rodale Press, 2009.

February Plant Tips

Jan Byrkeland is the manager of Hy-Vee Floral Shoppe at Hy-Vee Food Store, 2100 Broadway Ave. in Yankton. Thanks for her tips on the care of the azalea, a plant for Valentines’ Day or a winter treat.

- Azaleas are known as the “Cadillac of house plants” because they are easy to care for, their flowers are beautiful colors, and the plants bloom for a long time.

- Try to keep the azaleas’ soil moist in the container. If soil is dry, water thoroughly and drain excess water so the plant container is not setting in water.

- Azaleas prefer bright, diffused light, avoiding direct sunlight and a cool location. If you want to hold the blossoms a while, they can be put in a cooler.

- When azaleas stop blooming, their evergreen leaves remain until the plants bloom again. After frost in spring, azaleas may be set out on the patio.

Plant Exchange: Blog With Us!

This blog is an interactive site for people of our USDA Zone 4-5a region to exchange ideas about plants. Want to read some past Plant Exchange features you missed? Want to share a comment about plants?

- With the skills of local artisans and businesses, how does a Yankton homeowner create custom hardscape for his yard?
- Want to read a bit about Thomas Jefferson the gardener?
- How does a Yankton couple solve backyard hillside landscape issues with persistence, skills, and belay for safety?
- What differences has the drought made so far in Yankton parks and green spaces? What annuals withstood heat and drought the best?
- What are gardener tips from Yankton community garden plots?
- Want tips for houseplant care in winter?
- Want to see and read about what’s growing and blooming around the United States and elsewhere? “Garden Bloggers Bloom Day” link will show you selections from January 15, 2013. Check us out at the web address: brendakjohnsonplantexchange.wordpress.com

Dibbles & Bits

- Master Gardener Training 2013 will be offered by South Dakota State University Extension staff with Yankton as a regional site for three hands-on learning days in May. This year, online learning will be combined with the three sessions at the Yankton County Extension Office on Whiting Drive. Topics include care and selection of trees and shrubs, lawn care, vegetable and flower gardening and more. Application and fee deadline March 27th. Details on website: <http://www.sd-state.edu/sdces/resources/lawn/master-gardeners/>
Information contact: Mary Roduner, MG Coordinator at (605) 394-1722

- All-America Selections 2013 tags on varieties in seed and plant catalogs means the plant is easy to grow throughout the United States, comes in fashion colors, and has disease resistance. Winners are picked by judges across the country and scored by the independent non-profit organization. See winners for 2013 and past years on the website. America Gardening Award for is selected by public vote and has current winners on the website. <http://www.all-americanselections.org/>

- How is coyote urine collected? Some animal repellent products for plants list coyote urine as an ingredient. One way to get the urine is that coyotes are bred, caged, and maintained in cages with collecting pans beneath them. The concept for the repellent product with coyote urine is that it has the smell of a predator and deters rabbits or deer from eating the plants. Problem is that animals will eat plants if they are so hungry. If the same animal repellent is used over and over for some time, animals begin



PHOTO: BRENDA K. JOHNSON

Gaylene McMenamy has a passion for flowers and uses her talents to draw attention to the family business with contrasting leaves, bold colors, and sequence of plants in bloom all season.

to ignore the smell and eat the plants. Fine Gardening, February 2013.

- Seed and plant catalogs offer the novice, specialty, or organic gardener plenty of information for this year’s garden. For example, Johnny’s Selected Seeds has a website with a Growers’ Library of Videos such as for growing raspberries and an online tool to calculate number of seeds needed for your garden. www.johnnysseeds.com (877) 564-6697 Among many seed and plant catalogs / websites to inform the gardener

are: Harris Seeds: www.harris-seeds.com (800) 544-7938, Park Seed: www.parkseed.com (800) 845-3369, Seed Savers Exchange: www.seedsavers.org (563) 382-5990, Burpee: www.burpee.com (800) 888-1447, Thompson & Morgan: www.tmnseeds.com (800) 274-7333, Jung Seed & Plants: www.jungseed.com (800) 247-5864 Territorial Seed Company: www.TerritorialSeed.com (800) 626-0866, Seeds of Change: www.seedssofchange.com (888) 762-7333, and The Cook’s Garden: www.cooksgarden.com (800) 457-9703

YOU’RE NEWS!
The Press & Dakotan

YOUR NEWS!

The Press & Dakotan

YOU’RE NEWS!

We want to make you a loan!
\$100 - \$3000

GENTRY FINANCE
228 Capital • Yankton
605-665-7955

CONVENIENT LOAN
1818 Broadway Suite D-1 • Yankton
605-665-1640



You’ll find thousands of colors at Yankton Paint & Decorating. Our job is to help you find just the right one.

Introducing our new PINT sampling program – to help you get it just right!

Benjamin Moore®
Paints

Yankton Paint & Decorating

406 Broadway • Yankton, SD
665-5032