

Plant Exchange

# Attraction Action



PHOTO: BRENDA K. JOHNSON  
Clematis x jackmanii is a common purple clematis that blooms in spring and continues blooming into summer. It blooms from old wood so pruning after blooming ends allows for the most blooms the next year.



PHOTO: BRENDA K. JOHNSON

Menke's simple jelly feeder is versatile and easily hung among flowering plants in her planter. Flexible wire holds the shallow jar on a hook. A clothespin is the bird's perch. She even attaches one feeder below another for a full symphony.

## These Flowers Attract Pollinators And Birds

Share tips from your outdoor or indoor plant experience, give us a tour of your plant site, or let us know what you enjoy most about these plants and people who grow them. Contact news@yankton.net Attn: Brenda Johnson or write P&D, 319 Walnut St, Yankton, SD 57078, Attn: Brenda Johnson. See "Plant Exchange" blog on Facebook or www.brendakjohnsonplantexchange.wordpress.com

BY BRENDA K. JOHNSON

Ann Menke of Yankton likes colorful flowers and birds. She draws one to the other in summer with her tropical yellow hibiscus blooms, fuchsia bougainvillea, and all bright colors of annuals she can find when she replants her large containers along her yard border each spring.

She has enjoyed the tropical hibiscus and bougainvillea indoors overwinter. Now she re-pots them with bright annuals in large border containers. They have become staples she has re-planted several years, so she has learned what bird and pollinator attractors they are.

Hibiscus adds height and color to the containers. She adds bougainvillea and tries many new annuals with bright colors each summer to entice hummingbirds and orioles to come again. She adds sugar water feeders for hummingbirds' desserts that she tucks into the flowers and greenery of each container.

Menke makes a simple jelly feeder for orioles' desserts, and a re-purposed jar works well.

"At Hy-Vee, some (short and stout) jars such as the bruschetta tomato topping work well for this feeder," she said. "If you use a jar that is too deep (such as a pint jar), birds get jelly on themselves. We use shallow jars so birds don't get stuck in the jelly. You put a clothespin on the jar and my husband Dennis wraps the jar with wire to hold and hang it. Sometimes you can hook another feeder onto it."

She hangs one or more jelly feeders in each of the large containers.

"It's so pretty with the hibiscus and orange birds," she said. Her neighbors have remarked at what appears to be dozen orioles flying in and around the containers on a summer day — a color symphony without music.

"First we have the orioles back in spring and then their babies. Now they have grown up and the bees are looking for the jelly," she said.

At the end of the season, she discards the annuals and digs out the hibiscus and bougainvillea, placing them in small pots.

"Small pots are so I can move them around indoors," she said. "They bloom all winter." With her south-facing windows and by rotating her plants for sunlight, she brings summer indoors.



PHOTO: BRENDA K. JOHNSON

Ann Menke of Yankton draws pollinators and birds to her border planters along her front yard driveway. Yellow summer hibiscus nectar is a rare summer dessert for pollinators. When she wants to attract orioles to the planter, she posts jelly feeders on hooks in the container.

## Sedum, Succulent, Cactus: What's the Difference?

BY MARY ANN KING  
Master Gardener

It's all in the way they are grouped. The gardener only needs to remember the three classifiers of genus, species and cultivar for identification purposes. A genus encompasses a group of species that are closely related.

Species is a more specific classification within the genus group and can produce fertile offspring. For example in the name Sedum glaucophyllum, Sedum is the genus and glaucophyllum the species of Appalachian stonecrop that grows well in rocky alkaline soil.

A cultivar further classifies the sedum that has been selected for desirable traits. With Sedum glaucophyllum 'Dazzleberry' on the plant tag, the plant may appear burgundy instead of green.

Knowing these classifications will help in understanding the difference between sedum, succulents, and cactus. The word succulent is used to describe the plant characteristic and is not a formal classification. Succulents have some parts of the leaves, roots or stems that are thickened and fleshy, and retain water in arid climates or soil conditions. Within the same genus there may also be plants with succulent attributes and a normal plant stem. Lots of plants have some succulent characteristics that allow them to adapt to dry conditions. Succulents originated in arid regions and have features that allow them to survive drought.

Cactus retains water within the plant structure, which is also a succulent characteristic. Cacti commonly have thorns. Hobby

cactus growers often separate cacti from succulents by presence or absence of thorns rather than strictly by the botanical classification that are sometimes harder to see. Cacti are members of Cactaceae family. Because plants may have adaptations to dry conditions that make them appear related, this adds to confusion.

Sedum is a genus of flowering plants that also have the succulent characteristics of water storing leaves and stems. Sedums are part of the Crassulaceae family. Sedum is also commonly called stonecrop because of its stone like appearance. Appalachian stonecrop has a white flower. With 600 species found in the Northern

Hemisphere, sedums vary from annuals, perennials, and creeping herbs to shrubs. Sedum and cactus have succulent characteristics but come from two different families within the plant hierarchy.

If a gardener wishes to develop a rock garden or to grow drought resistant plants, seeking cultivars with succulent characteristics would be a good choice. These plants are beautiful and have unique body forms. There are numerous varieties of cultivars that are low growing or tall, flowering and creeping plants that, once established, require minimal care.

## Special Touch



PHOTO: BRENDA K. JOHNSON

A class of students at Winside Elementary in Winside, Nebraska, planned a way to dress up the school entrance for a summer town celebration. Before school was out they carried out their plan with minimal cost materials. They made holes in straw bales and added potting soil, hardy geraniums, and watered it well. They added creative touches to welcome the public. Summer staff now keeps plants watered. "Hay bale gardening" is a way to use bales as containers where soil is less favorable or not available. The bale decomposes slowly and adds organic matter to growing flowers or vegetables. Stacked bales are easier on a gardener's back and plants are out of rabbit reach. Attentive watering is necessary to grow annuals in this manner. Perennials cannot survive the winter in this above ground method.

## Dibbles And Bits

- Free compost from Yankton Landfill grass clippings is available for your use. Compost adds organic matter and nutrients to the soil. Natural process for making compost kills most weed seeds. Some are concerned that chemicals may have been applied to lawn clippings disposed at the landfill. They apply the compost after a holding period, but one's own discretion is advised. The City of Yankton uses this same compost in public space plant projects. Yankton Park & Recreation staff uses a mixture of about 25% compost with topsoil for re-seeding turf, flower planters, and planting trees. Adding more than 25% compost to topsoil is not recommended, as plants need benefits of soil too. Bring your own bucket and shovel because you load compost yourself. Gate attendant will show you where to drive to get the compost. Enjoy compost benefits over time. Yankton Landfill, 1200 W. 23rd St. 605-668-5212 Regular hours are 8 a.m.-3:45 p.m.

- Memorial to Stacey Meyers and her dog Kirby has newly planted flowers. Keep Yankton Beautiful (KYB) president Cheryl Sommer conferred with Lisa Kortan of Yankton Parks & Recreation for colorful and hardy plant choices. Sommer purchased flowers locally with a gift certificate from Modern Woodman. Purple, blue, yellow, and pink are in the color palette for petunias, marigolds, Salvia, Dusty Miller, and potato vines. When Sommer planted the flowers,

she saw children from the soccer field come over to fill their water bottles with cold water at the fountain. Tennis courts are nearby. People walked by with their dogs. A dog fountain provided water for them too. Two benches contributed from the community gave a spot to rest. Four families and others contributed to the memorial for public use. Yankton Parks & Recreation will maintain and add flowerbeds to the memorial. Keep Yankton Beautiful sponsored the project through awarded grants and local contributions.

- Roses can be grown in a container as an annual. Say you don't have a flowerbed or the right soil or location. Or maybe you want to see the rose up close in a sunny location on your deck. Find a compact and disease resistant variety. As you choose your planter, recall that small containers dry out more quickly in the heat of summer. Water the rose when the soil surface is dry and continue until water flows out of container drain holes. Nutrients leech out of containers with frequent watering, so add a dilute solution about weekly. Ease up on fertilizer during high heat stress. Trim off spent flowers and cut back as desired. See more about container gardening at Horticulture Smart Gardening online: [http://www.hortmag.com/weekly-tips/garden-design/tips-for-growing-roses-in-containers?et\\_](http://www.hortmag.com/weekly-tips/garden-design/tips-for-growing-roses-in-containers?et_)

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