



PHOTO: BRENDA K. JOHNSON
Last succession planting of string beans grows in early October in Old Salem Tribal House Gardens in Winston Salem, North Carolina. Garden methods used here copied 1759 garden plans. Note raised borderless rectangles with multiple plants each, and richly composted, finely cultivated soil. Companion corn plants nearby were positioned in the garden so that no sun plants shaded others.

Plant Exchange

How Does Your Garden Grow?

Share tips from your outdoor or indoor plant experience, give us a tour of your plant site, or just let us know what you enjoy most about the plants and people who grow them. Contact 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

DECIDING HOW WE PLANT

By now many gardeners in our region have turned soil. Still fresh in mind, we have just chosen the same way of growing vegetables or flowers again, or we are trying a bit different approach that suits our location.

Garden methods for growing quality produce are as old as cultivated soil. In 1759, gardeners used mounded narrow rectangles of compost-laden soil to plant beans in Winston Salem, North Carolina. The beans pictured were growing on October 1st in a last succession planting for harvest in that growing zone.

Two hundred and fifty years later, some gardeners plant areas of beans in borderless raised beds of loam soil. Some treasured methods transcend

custom and tradition and do improve results.

Today's garden methods build on historic procedures and also address current issues such as finding suitable garden soil. Mel Bartholomew's All New Square Foot Gardening and John Jeavons' How To Grow More Vegetables are classics found at the Yankton Community Library that show how methods below can work today.

- For poor soil, raised bed garden frames can be built and filled with mixtures such as peat moss, vermiculite, and compost for growing plants.

- Determine what you want from the garden so you get successful results. If volume of vegetables is your goal, companion planting, that is, pairing plants that grow well together, such as squash among corn stalks, may save space and increase yields. As well, weeds may be deterred with squash as canopy, while soil remains moist from squash plant cover.

- If self-reliance or sustainability of growing your own food appeals, another step in self-reliance is reducing waste in the garden. Spent vines that are not diseased can become compost plant material. Grocery store containers are re-purposed water funnels, wind protectors, and insect traps.

- Rely more on compost to naturally supply a balance of slow-released nutrients. Improving the soil organic matter with compost is a multi-season process. Compost made from grass clippings and plant material is available at no charge at the Yankton Transfer Station.

- Healthy soil is loose and crumbly. Once soil contains enough organic matter and has been prepared for planting, minimal tillage allows soil organisms to maintain soil health without being disturbed.

- Succession plant beans after garden peas are harvested for more fresh young beans during the season. Some gardeners only plant a few hills of the bean row every two weeks to keep young beans available during the season while others want beans mainly for canning or freezing, so all-at-once harvest is preferred.

- Some plants grow better in a group instead of a row. For example lettuce, beans, and peas planted in groups with adequate spacing between seeds provide their own soil shade, which also reduces weeding.

For more sources on growing methods, see February/March Mother Earth News magazine at Yankton Community Library or Google "IGrow SDSU Extension" for vegetable growing methods.

Plant Exchange: Blog With Us!

This blog is about plants and people who grow them in our USDA Zone 4-5a region. You will find plant topics featuring our gardeners and professionals who share about plants, with space to comment if you wish. Here are recent posts:

- Gardeners from the region share their favorite 'tried and true' annuals and perennials.
- A gardener from the region shares ways to garden easy and avoid some physical stress.
- See how row covers are used to deter animals and harmful insects, and protect vegetable plants.
- Professionals provide plant tips to encourage children to garden.
- Want to see what's blooming here and in Indianapolis or California? See "Garden Bloggers Bloom Day" on the June 15th link.

Check our blog at: www.brendakjohnsonplantexchange.wordpress.com

June Plant Tips

Stan Hoffart has worked for 35 years in landscape design with trees, perennials, and annuals of the region and currently does design and consulting work. Thanks for his seasonal reminders for gardeners.

- Now is a good time to prune spring blooming shrubs. Pruning now will allow time to form buds for next year.
- If your roses winter killed last winter, consider replacing them with hardy shrub roses or roses grown on their own roots.
- When replacing trees and shrubs that died last winter, purchase them at a reputable nursery. Just because it's sold here doesn't mean it will grow here.
- There is still time to fill in bare places in your flowerbeds with annuals. If the plants are over-grown, most can be cut back.

Dibbles & Bits

- Crofton Tour of Lawns and Gardens is Saturday, June 14, anytime between 8 a.m.-1 p.m., beginning at the Crofton Senior Citizen Center. Cost of tour is \$15 and includes light lunch. Tour is a fundraiser for the Crofton Senior Citizens Center.

Master Gardener Update

Public is invited to 2014 South Dakota Master Gardener Update on Saturday, Sept. 27 of the annual weekend master gardener conference. Presentations will be held at the NFAA Easton Yankton Archery Complex in Yankton.



Kim Todd

Some plant enthusiasts in our region watch "Backyard Farmer," a Nebraska Public Television interactive program about Nebraska plants hosted by Kim Todd. Morning general session of the update will open with Todd's presentation on "the why's of gardening."

Associate Professor at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UN-L) and Nebraska Extension Horticulture Specialist, Todd has worked in landscape design at Finke Gardens & Nursery in Lincoln and also later at the UN-L campus before her current appointment.

Other Update concurrent presentations and local field-trips will include topics in flowers, trees, landscaping, vegetable and nature, from more than a dozen presenters from South Dakota State University, South Dakota Extension, and the region.

Enjoy the day interacting with others interested in plants. For how to register and questions, see "Missouri Valley Master Gardeners" on Facebook or email them at missourivalleymg@yahoo.com

New, Hot Plants In Region

Area greenhouses, nurseries, florists, and garden centers in this region were invited to tell readers about new or popular plants they'd like to show you.

- Citronella geraniums can scent your garden with fragrant leaves that are said to keep mosquitos away. Angie Luken and Julie Manning are the "Greenhouse Girls" at Kopesky's Ace Hardware, 2404 Broadway Ave. in Yankton. (605) 260-2813 Their greenhouse also has Agastache, popcorn plant, and pineapple sage scented plants, as well as kohlrabi, Swiss chard, sweet potatoes, eggplant, broccoli and cauliflower garden plants, fresh seasoning herbs, succulents, and cacti. They invite you to ask if you don't see what you are looking for.

- Echinacea "Cheyenne Spirit" perennial blooms mid summer to early fall, has vivid colors of scarlet, yellow, cream, white, or purple, is sturdy, drought tolerant, deer resistant, and attracts butterflies and birds eat seed heads. Gardener Diane Dickes is owner of Diane's Greenhouse, 88781 557th Ave. Fordyce, NE (402) 357-5754 or www.dianesgreenhouse.com They offer many varieties of annuals, "Proven Winner" varieties, perennials, trees, shrubs and roses.

- "Little Devil" ninebark (Physocarpus opulifolius) perennial is a 3- to 4-foot compact shrub with pinkish white flowers and burgundy leaves. It has the beauty and low-maintenance of larger ninebarks according to nurseryman Jay Gurney, owner of Yankton Nurseries, 2000 Ferdig Ave., Yankton (605) 665-6560 or on Facebook. See their trees, shrubs, roses and other perennials, succulents and cacti, and annual flower and vegetable plants.

- Potunia, especially the papaya or peachy orange with a yellow center, is favorite but also comes in red and yellow. Potunias are a unique breed of petunias that are long-blooming, have a rounding habit, perform well in summer heat, and are perfect for pots and beds, but do a great job in a hanging basket. Gardener Dianne Hoffer is owner of Backyard Gardens, 205 E. Prairie, and Beresford, SD. (605) 254-2949 (North on 2nd St and East on Prairie). Along with perennials for sale, you can see landscaped beds with mature sample perennials growing in place to see size and nature.

Planting Container Trees For The Yard

Lisa Kortan, Urban Forester for the City of Yankton, plants and cares for many trees in green spaces and parks around town. She gives pointers as you plant trees that come from the nursery in containers.

- We dig the hole as big as the container and then make the hole another foot bigger in diameter. This allows plenty of room for the roots to begin to grow in loosely packed soil.

- I like to mostly plant the tree in the soil present, unless there is clay or gravel. Then bring in topsoil.

- Plant the tree at the same depth as the nursery did for its container. You don't want the root ball above the soil or the tree too deep. Some trees are grafted, and have a hook or elbow at the base of the trunk. You don't want to bury that hook.

- We water as soon as we plant the tree and lightly pack the soil around the trunk with a shovel handle.

- Mulch is important. It helps the tree retain mois-



PHOTO: BRENDA K. JOHNSON

Pagoda dogwood is a tree often found in containers at local nurseries.

ture. It slows weeds. You don't have as many weed-eater problems.

- Make sure you put white plastic tubing tree guards on especially young maples and birch. Tubing reflects light in the winter and helps keep the sap from

starting to flow in the trunk too early. Tree stays dormant until spring. These guards or sleeves help deter deer or rabbits. For maples, I don't remove the guards until the tree develops mature bark. It's important to monitor so the guards re-

main bigger diameter than the trunks. You can find an array at Yankton Nurseries or Diane's Greenhouse in Fordyce. Diane has five-inch guards for 1.5-inch diameter trees. You want the tube vented for airflow next to the trunk so that insects don't nest there.

- Trees are usually well pruned from the nursery. Light pruning to improve branch spacing is OK, but you should never prune more than one-third of a tree.

- I only stake trees that are leaning without the wind blowing. We use soft material such as one-inch burlap "Tree Straps" that I hook to a post. I buy them locally. Towels or sections of garden hose with wire inside are other options. Make sure the wire doesn't rub the tree. Check the stake every few months to make sure it is loose. When the wind blows, there should be a couple of inches gap to allow the tree to move so roots will establish well.

Water-Wise Tips That Enhance Décor

Drought conditions in Tucson, Arizona over 40 years ago resulted in efforts toward water conservation that are evident in many yards and gardens there today. According to the Weather Channel, Tucson is more than 20 degrees warmer year-round than the Yankton area and receives 15 inches less rainfall on average. While Tucson is desert and this region is grassland, perhaps we can learn from Tucson citizens' water-wise tips that add attractive décor.



LEFT: Agave and cactuses are positioned apart as specimen plants in a bed with water supplied by drip irrigation. Plants are light-colored and reflect summer heat. Pea gravel retains moisture. Natural stones add to the bed with shape, color, and texture. Number of plants per bed is modest. CENTER: Besides privacy, the backyard wall enclosure protects plants from drying winds and provides some shade on hot summer days. A raised bed with irrigation is in use. Tropical plants that typically require extra water are confined to containers in an area so they may be easily watered. RIGHT: Drain spout water is filtered with a cloth cover over the large re-purposed rain barrel. The rain catch barrel is on a stand for placing a bucket under the spigot of this gravity flow system. Note the overflow to the rain barrel in the foreground and to an area with plants in case of a downpour. Hand painting personalizes the barrels, as they become yard art. (Photos: Brenda K. Johnson)



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