

Outside The Box

New Season Offers New Gardening Opportunities

BY RITA BRHEL
P&D Correspondent

Every year, Good Friday marks the beginning of spring, hailing gardeners to plant their potatoes, start their spring vegetables, and finalize summer crop plans. Soon, stores will stock their garden centers with seeds and transplants, tools and supplies, for the upcoming growing season and gardeners will clear their plots of land, tilling and hoeing in rows and hills of onions, green beans, sweet corn, and tomatoes.

Backyard gardening can be as much an annual tradition as a source of income, if the hobby is looked at much in the same way as another small business. For gardeners who sell their extra vegetables at area farmers markets, especially in Sioux Falls or Sioux City, Iowa, there is a growing opportunity to appeal to the ethnic market.

According to the U.S. Census, approximately 20 percent of the nation's population is of ethnicities other than White American. And with these ethnicities come unique flavors not commonly found in America's grocery stores, providing an occasion for gardeners to fill the gap — not to mention, expand the palate of adventurous consumers who want to step away from zucchini and cucumbers.

The University of Illinois recently held an online training for gardeners interested in trying their green thumbs are growing unusual, and still largely unknown, vegetables that are rising in popularity among ethnic consumers.

"With a lot of these, people may not understand what they are. You might have to do some education with these," said Kyle Cecil, local foods specialist with the University of Illinois Extension in Galesburg, Ill.:

- Arugula is a tangy mustard green. It's grown in the early spring or late fall, tolerates a wide variety of soils, is grown from seed, and is easy to grow. It's harvested like spinach: cut and bunched, kept cool and out of the sun, as it's extremely perishable.

- Swiss chard, a cousin to the beet, is grown instead for its leaves. In American cooking, arugula and Swiss chard are largely viewed as gourmet salad greens. It's planted in the early spring and is grown from seed, but needs nitrogen-rich soil. It's harvested when the leaves are seven to nine inches long. Only the outer leaves are taken, leaving the inner leaves to grow, and the leaves are bundled in 10 to 12 stems.

- Ginger is a perennial grown mainly in Asia, whose ground-up root is used for spices, tea, oils, and medicinal purposes. Ginger is among the most consumed spices in the United States, not only in cooking but also as a widely embraced way to ward off nausea during pregnancy morning sickness and motion sickness, and to aid in weight loss. It's pre-sprouted in coco-peat at 70 to 80 degrees Fahrenheit, then transplanted to pots or plots with well-drained soil, kept in full sun, with day and night-time temperatures staying above 55 degrees, and composted and mulched. The root is harvested when it reaches an approximate size of two-by-two feet and must be handled, washed, and dried delicately.

- Turmeric is grown for its roots, which are ground into a spice common in Chinese, Indian, and Caribbean cuisine. It is best known for being made into Indian curry, mustard, and cheese but also has less well-known medicinal properties — it is potent against cancer, infections, and digestive disorders. Turmeric is not used in traditional American cooking, but says James Theuri, local foods specialist with the University of Illinois Extension in Bourbonnais, Ill: "If you don't grow them for anything else, grow them in your garden because the



flowers are beautiful." Turmeric is grown similarly to ginger.

- Tomatillo, or the Husk Tomato, looks like the wild Chinese Lantern in that a thin husk envelopes the round, green vegetable inside. Tomatillos are used in Latin American cooking and are easy to grow, hardy with few insect or disease problems, and have long storage ability. They're grown like the tomato, started indoors from seed and then transplanted into the garden plot. They're used when they are still green, before they ripen into a light yellow color.

- Celeriac is regarded as a gourmet food in American cooking, but is a staple in French cuisine. It's grown for its root but the whole plant can be eaten. Easier to grow than celery, celeriac has few pest or disease problems and has a long storage ability. It has a long growing season — 120 days — and is started indoors from seed and then transplanted into the rows. Watering consistently is important, and the soil must be high in organic matter. It's harvested when the root is swollen to three to four inches wide.

- Asian greens, including bok choy, Chinese broccoli, Chinese spinach, kun choy, and tatsoi, are used heavily in Asian cooking. They are also very nutritious compared to American greens, known for being high in vitamins A and C, calcium, magnesium, and antioxidants. They can be direct-seeded or transplanted, are cold tolerant, and grow quickly, but their soils need to be high in potassium, in a pH range of 5.5 to 7.0, with a row cover, and the plants need to be watered often. "If you think about where they came from, we're talking about lush, green mountains of Asia, and they're used to having water on the leaves all the

time," said Christopher Konieczka, local foods specialist with the University of Illinois Extension in Bloomington, Ill. Asian greens also have a lot of pest problems, including the cabbage worm, cabbage looper, aphids, and flea beetle. Asian greens also have strict storage requirements, needing to be washed and stored at 32 degrees and 95 percent humidity and tend to spoil after about a week.

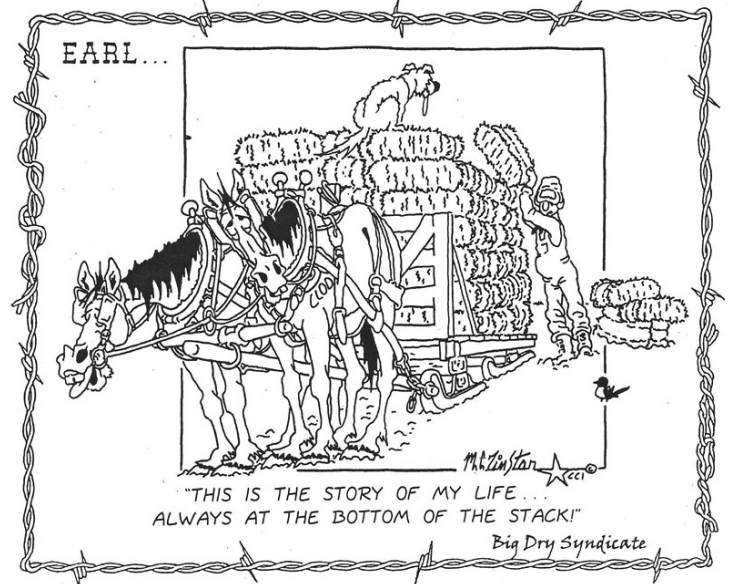
- Edamame is the edible form of the field soybean. High in protein, it's growing in popularity in America but is used most often in Asian cooking. It's also grown just like field soybeans, although adjustments need to be made in production to scale it down to backyard gardening. Many gardeners find mulch or cover crops helpful with edamame, since as a food crop, it has different management options than field soybeans. Edamame is hand-harvested and sold in the pod. "Be sure to educate consumers that they're eating the beans inside the pod and not the pod itself," Konieczka said. "The pods don't taste good, and for consumers who don't know that, it can be a real turnoff." Like Asian greens, edamame is a pest magnet, from leaf beetles and aphids to deer and birds, and is a high-maintenance keeper — needing to be stored at 32 degrees with 95 percent humidity.

- Jerusalem artichoke, or sunchoke, sunroot, or earth apple, is a wildflower here around Yankton, but its root has been a staple winter vegetable for Native Americans for centuries. It requires a long season — 125 days — and is planted in the fall where it waits to germinate in the spring. It's planted like a potato, with chunks of root containing buds, but in

hills. It does well in drier climates and blooms from August to October. The sunflower-like blossoms grow on 10- to 12-foot stems. It's hardy, easy to grow, and extremely productive. It's harvested at the end of the growing season like potatoes and tastes like a sweet potato.

- Salsify, or oyster plant, is another common weed in the Yankton area. In fact, in South Dakota, this plant is listed as an invasive species due to its ability to crowd out other plants. Its origins are Mediterranean. All parts of the plant are edible, and the root tastes slightly of oysters. It's a biennial grown as an annual, much like the parsnip, with a long season — 120-150 day. It's easy to grow, grown from seed, drought tolerant, and its only pest is the aphid. It is also extremely productive, yielding 10 pounds per 10-foot row, and the roots store well as a winter vegetable.

- Bitter melon is a member of the cucumber family and is used in Asian, Indian, and Latin American cuisine. It tastes very bitter and is used in teas, for medicinal purposes, and prepared for food fried or paired with meat. It requires very warm growing conditions — 80 to 90 degrees — with high humidity, full sun, and good drainage. The seeds need to be soaked and then planted in hills with access to six-foot trellises. It has several insect pests and requires pruning. But bitter melon is very productive, yielding four to five tons per acre, and has a long storage ability, up to three weeks in cool conditions.



Sericea Lespedeza Declared Noxious Weed

LINCOLN, Neb. — In order to protect the quality of Nebraska's agricultural and other land, Nebraska Department of Agriculture (NDA) Director Greg Ibach is designating sericea lespedeza as a noxious weed in Nebraska. The designation will take effect on April 1.

"This weed poses a threat to our native ranges and pastureland as well as other natural areas," Ibach said. "It can reduce or even eliminate native grasses, and it affects the quality and quantity of pasture available to our livestock herds."

Sericea lespedeza is a perennial that grows well in grasslands and pastures as well as along roadsides and drainage areas. The weed currently is found mainly in southeastern Nebraska and can be spread by wildlife and livestock. Infested areas that are utilized for hay production accelerate the spread of the weed into new areas.

With the addition of sericea lespedeza, Nebraska has 12 noxious weeds. The list includes: Canada thistle, leafy spurge, musk thistle, plumeless thistle, purple loosestrife, spotted knapweed, diffuse knapweed, saltcedar, phragmites, Japanese knotweed and giant knotweed.

Those with questions about sericea lespedeza should contact their local county weed control superintendent. Questions also may be directed to the NDA Noxious Weed Program Manager at (402) 471-6844.

Project Available To S.D. Swine Producers

Swine producers in the southeast part of South Dakota are encouraged to become involved in the SESD PRRS ARC Project. This is a voluntary initiative lead by local pork producers and veterinarians.

The goals of the project are:

- increase awareness of PRRS and the associated costs,
- set-up surveillance and a communication structure to identify and notify producers of PRRS breaks,
- reduce the number and severity of PRRS breaks in the region,
- improve regional biosecurity,
- and study PRRS transmission and efficacy of control methods.

Why should swine producers be involved in the SE SD PRRS ARC Project? Those producers already involved in the project enjoy the open and positive communication of knowing a farm's current PRRS status. They also enjoy being able to talk about the biosecurity practices being utilized at their farm and learning biosecurity practices from other producers to see what practices help reduce the spread and transmission of PRRS. All of those involved in the project realize that PRRS is going to be around for a while unless we work together as an industry to troubleshoot how the virus spreads. Producers involved also like the idea that being involved in the project allows them to know the PRRS status of farms in their area, which can lessen the chance of their farm breaking with PRRS. An example, producers communicate with the feed mill by having feed delivered to a negative site first followed by feed being delivered to a positive site.

How can producers become involved in the project? First, all producers must sign a consent form which allows the producer's herd to be mapped with the current PRRS status. The consent form also states that any information received cannot be discussed unless with other participating producers and producers cannot bring any claim or suit against any other party involved in the project. After a consent form is signed, the producer must test their herd twice a year for PRRS and notify the project coordinator of the testing results. Participating producers receive a monthly bulletin updating them of any new farms that have joined the project, a map identifying all farms participating with their current PRRS status, and information regarding the latest PRRS research, biosecurity techniques, and transmission.

Why should swine producers worry about PRRS? PRRS costs the swine industry an estimated \$640 million annually and when you break that down PRRS accounts for a loss of \$1.8 million per day to the industry. Of that \$640 million, \$302.06 million is lost in the breeding herd annually (\$52.19 per breeding female/year) and \$361.8 million is lost in the growing herd annually. With the tight profit margins, producers are always looking for ways to decrease their expenses and decreasing the chance of their herd becoming infected with PRRS could be a game changer.

For more information or to become involved in the project, contact project coordinator Ashley Gelderman Swine Field Specialist at 605-782-3290 or ashley.gelderman@sdstate.edu.

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Introducing Dr. Adams Orthopedic Surgeon.



Yankton Medical Clinic, P.C. is pleased to announce the association of Brent Adams, MD, Board Certified Orthopedic Surgeon

Dr. Adams is originally from Yankton, completed his undergraduate degree at South Dakota State University, and is a graduate of The University of South Dakota School of Medicine.

Dr. Adams completed his orthopedic surgery residency at the University of Kansas-Wichita and a fellowship in spine surgery at the Twin Cities Spine Center in Minneapolis, MN. He is board certified in orthopedic surgery and has also been a faculty member for the University of Kansas-Wichita orthopedic surgery residency program.

He will provide care for a multitude of musculoskeletal conditions with a subspecialty focus in spine surgery. Conditions that he will treat include cervical and lumbar spinal stenosis, scoliosis, disk herniations, sciatica, arthroscopic rotator cuff repair, total joint replacement of the hip, knee and shoulder, fracture care, carpal tunnel surgery and athletic injuries.

He is a member of the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons, North American Spine Society, and Scoliosis Research Society.

Dr. Adams began seeing patients at the Yankton Medical Clinic, P.C. March 11, 2013.

Appointments can be made by calling 605-665-1722.

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