

Master Gardeners Present Spring Fling

BY BRENDA K. JOHNSON
P&D Correspondent

Commonly asked plant care questions and what's new this season are topics Diane Dickes will discuss at the Spring Fling sponsored by Missouri Valley Master Gardeners. Area master gardeners organize a spring and fall plant-related presentations for the public each year.

Diane Dickes, owner and designer at Diane's Greenhouse near Fordyce, Nebraska, is the featured presenter on Tuesday, March 24, at 7 p.m. at the Avera Professional Pavilion, 501 Summit St. in Yankton. A free will donation is appreciated to cover expenses but all are welcome.

Her topics will include watering and care of new plants, mulching, and tree guards. Dickes also welcomes questions from the audience. She'll share some new varieties she's excited about this season.

"If you just bought a tree, shrub or perennial and you don't keep it watered, and you put it in the ground dry, it's on the way out," Dickes said.

"We recommend 20 gallons of water per week for a new tree. In the drought of 2012, some ten-year-old trees were forgotten. Plants went into winter dry that year. Deep watering is essential for winter survival. As plants come out of dormancy, if they haven't had a good watering, start watering," she said.

"If we have a dry spring, then keep watering trees you have planted the past two — five years. If you hold a hose as you water, you aren't giving the tree enough water. The whole area around the tree needs to be soaked. Instead you might set the hose down and let it trickle for a few hours," she said.

Enough time to water is a common issue. Dickes uses a TreeGator for her newly planted trees; a 20-gallon plastic soaker bag of water that she fills with a hose and water slowly moistens soil around the tree.

"You fill them once a week. We move ours from tree to tree," she said.

Plants growing in a container don't need so much water when it's cooler. Holes in the bottom of the pot allow needed drainage. When it's hot out, container plants need daily water. Because all the water flows through containers, the fertilizer is leached out. She prefers organic fertilizer because it doesn't burn the plant and dilutes her Daniel's fertilizer and she uses it often.

She says one of the secrets of having a USDA Zone 5 tree, such as a peach tree survive, is adequate mulch. She's not a fan of matted grass clippings for mulch. She prefers bark or leaves because they air more airy. She suggests a base of about four inches and a diameter of three feet or so for a tree.

"I don't pull mulch away in spring cleanup," she said. Mulch keeps soil cool so that buds don't emerge too early and are killed by frost. "I use mushroom compost and leave it on year to year. Plants grow through it. It decomposes and I top dress more," she said.

White flexible tree guards help prevent winter sunscald.

"We had a warm January and then we had hard frost. Sap starts to rise in trees and it can burst the tree. White reflects light," she said.

Dickes doesn't recommend tree staking unless the tree will not stay upright. The tree gets stronger from free movement.

Among new varieties Dickes is featuring this season are barberries, hydrangeas, and



PHOTO: BRENDA K. JOHNSON
Diane Dickes of Diane's Greenhouse, about 12 miles south of Yankton near Fordyce, Nebraska, has expanded her plants to fit under three attached greenhouses.

Missouri Valley Master Gardener Spring Fling

Diane Dickes presenter
Tuesday, March 24, 7 p.m.
Avera Professional Pavilion
501 Summit Street, Yankton

spireas. Drought-resistant upright barberries have orange, gold, or rose leaves and require little pruning if provided space. New hydrangea varieties provide an array of colored flowers from mid summer into fall and are easy care. Spireas now have a variety of leaf colors and more self-cleaning blossoms.

Fairy gardens are catching on in the region as gifts for those who don't have another garden. State fairs have fairy garden categories for youth who enjoy assembling theme gardens. Air plants are easy care small plants that fit well in fairy gardens. Dickes is offering a make and take workshop to construct a fairy garden in April. For more information, see on Diane's Greenhouse Facebook page or call her.

After fifteen years, Diane's Greenhouse has expanded to three greenhouses of plants under one roof. She now offers a full array of plants, seed, organic fertilizer, accessories and landscape design assistance. She listens to her customers for areas of growth.

She started with one greenhouse for a stay at home mom with four children to use her creativity and extra income to make designer plant baskets. From Wisconsin, she and her Nebraska husband moved back to raise their children. The youngest is in high school.

"I like working," Dickes said. "It's actually relaxing to work. I get work driven from my mom. I have all these ideas and in winter, I put them into fruition. This is hobby, it's business, and it's life." Her series of workshops at the greenhouse is part of her added dimension to her business.

Area master gardeners are pleased Dickes will share her plant skills with the public at the Spring Fling. These plant-related presentations have become annual



PHOTO: BRENDA K. JOHNSON
Fairy gardens are a way to express creativity with plants in a small space. Dickes selects small plants and accessories to complete her theme. She plans a fairy garden "make and take" workshop for April.

events here. Master gardener Shann Doerr, explains their purpose.

"Our master gardener mission is to inform, educate, and interact with the community about horticulture and share our enthusiasm for gardening," Doerr said.

"Community activities along with other volunteer projects for this season include the Yankton Area Garden Tour on June 27th, our volunteers will be at the Yankton Community Gardens by schedule posted there, our Fall Plant Sale will be at the Territorial Capitol, and we will sponsor a Fall Fling plant presentation." See "Missouri Valley Master Gardeners" on Facebook. For Spring Fling questions contact Shann Doerr at (605) 660-7439.

Master Gardener training will be offered by South Dakota State University Extension staff at Mitchell with most of the training online. April 10th deadline for applications and information at www.igrow.org Questions: Dr. David Graper at: david.graper@sdstate.edu or 605-688-5796.



BRENDA K. JOHNSON
Dale Dawson of Lewis & Clark Recreation Area has developed a deer guard for protecting young trees from damage. Materials are simple and re-usable. The guard is removed when tree has developed its coarse bark. Examples of these tree guards are found throughout the state park.

Deer Tree Guards At State Park

BY BRENDA K. JOHNSON
P&D Correspondent

Dale Dawson, conservation foreman at Lewis & Clark Recreation Area, plants more than 150 new trees in an average year at the state park. He's motivated to find deer protection for the young trees and so far the tree guard he developed has worked.

Materials per tree are three 5-foot fence posts, length of 4 feet welded wire fence cut in half lengthwise, roll of flexible wire to hold fence to the posts and tree staking wire and short sections of garden hose if needed.

Once the tree is planted, he adds chipped wood mulch in about a two-foot radius or so around the tree.

"We set the fence posts just inside the outer edge of the mulch," Dawson said. Mowers can circle the edge of the mulch and not disturb the post.

He fashioned a cylinder of 2-foot wire that fitted just inside the three posts at the right height for the individual tree so deer can't get under or over the fence to get at the tree. The average placement of the fence cylinder is about 2 1/2 feet above the tree base. This allows for top dressing the mulch in the spring.

Before he set the posts, he made sure the wire cylinder is the right circumference so that the individual tree has room to move with the wind inside the wire tube without damaging its bark. He said allowing the trees to move with the wind helps strengthen the trunk from snapping off in the future. If staking is needed, he adds the bark friendly lengths of garden hose to the wire and secures them to the posts. He removes stakes after a year.

"Deer guards are holding up well to deer damage. It adds about \$15 to the cost of the tree but the materials are reusable. When the course bark develops on the tree deer don't bother the tree anymore we can remove the guard. Favorites for deer damage are young maple trees," he said. Mature trees are a valuable resource in the park. The cost/benefit ratio is well worth protecting the new trees.

"For regular sleeve tree protectors, deer have slid them up to rub the trunks during rut causing damage and even killing the tree. The sleeves help if rabbits and rodents try to girdle the tree," Dawson said. These tree guards are throughout the park.

Healthy Yankton Community Garden Plots Still Available

The Healthy Yankton Community Garden invites gardeners still wishing to reserve garden plots to make reservations as soon as possible. Contact Angie O'Connor, Avera Sacred Heart Community wellness coordinator at 605-668-8590. Garden plots will be

reserved on a first-come, first-served basis. Garden plots are approximately 12 feet by 18 feet. The registration fee is \$20 per plot and the garden is anticipated to open mid-April!

O'Connor will assist new gardeners in making garden plot reservations. O'Connor will review the rules, assist with

completion of paperwork, assign the plot number, and make arrangements for payment of the gardener's registration fee. The Community Garden is located along Yankton's West City Limits Road, on the Marne Creek West City Park, which shares a parking lot with the Dog Park.

Anyone having questions about the Healthy Yankton Community Garden should contact Angie O'Connor at 605-668-8590. O'Connor and Healthy Yankton invite everyone to put down roots toward healthier lifestyles with a lot of growth this summer!

'Garden-pedia' Authors Get To The Root Of Horticultuereal Terminology

BY WILLIAM HAGEMAN
Chicago Tribune (TNS)

Maria Zampini has spent a lifetime in the garden industry. She's a fourth-generation nursery person whose family had a destination garden center in Ohio for more than 30 years. She's also the president and owner of UpShoot, a horticultural marketing firm that specializes in bringing new plants to market.

She knows the business. The problem is other people, who don't.

"I remember hiring individuals who had no experience with horticulture, and they'd stumble over some of the common terms we use," she said. "I also had it in the back of my mind we should have a little dictionary as part of our employee manual."

In her work as a writer for consumer magazines, she says she would catch herself using a term that not everybody knew. "You grew up hearing it, but they didn't. So I'd rewrite that sentence."

She has finally solved the problem by writing, with horticulturist Pamela Bennett, "Garden-pedia: An A-to-Z Guide to Gardening Terms" (St. Lynn's Press), which codifies a lot of the terminology that new and veteran gardeners use. Bennett is the Ohio Master Gardener volunteer coordinator and director for Ohio State University Extension in Clark County.

"If someone looks for a



term (online) it's very technical in nature," Zampini said. "We said it'd be nice if there was something more conversational in tone, and the average person can understand it."

When she and Bennett started brainstorming, they had 600 words. Those that the average gardener wouldn't use got scrapped. They ended up with about 300 terms, starting with "abiotic" (a nonliving organism) and ending with "zone" (a geographic area defined by average winter, or summer, temperature). As with many terms, there's additional commentary and helpful color photos. The zone definition also includes two full-color maps for the U.S. and Canada.

And even the expert learned a thing or two.

"There are terms I didn't know," she says. "There's one, a ha-ha. Pam came up with it."

And, as long as we're here: A ha-ha is a term for a sunken fence that creates a barrier for animals while allowing the viewer on the other, higher side an unfettered view. Typically, it involves a retaining wall between a sloping ditch on one side and higher ground on the other. "Think of this as a ditch that you can't see in the distance," the authors write, "but only when you come upon it — hence the name."

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