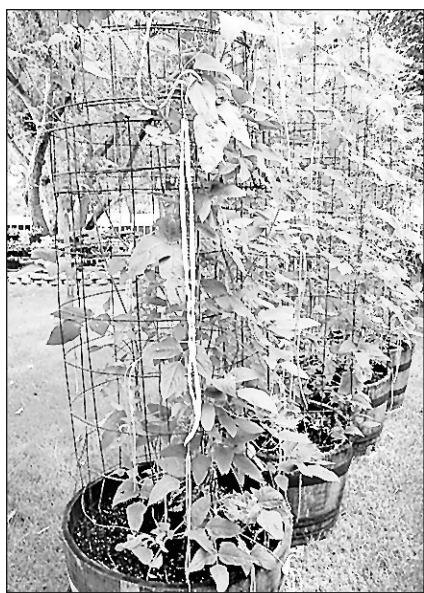


Most Varied Yankton Container Garden?



BRENDA K. JOHNSO

Dr. Nick Saoi grows these Philippine beans in his backyard. Pods are two feet long.



BRENDA K. JOHNSO

Most of Dr. Saoi's orchids bloom in winter. Petals of this Phalaenopsis orchid give it its moth-like shape.



BRENDA K. JOHNSO

Dr. Saoi also built another plant stand like this to display tuberos begonias and other flowers outdoors.

PLANT EXCHANGE

BY BRENDA K JOHNSON

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

Q: Who grows the greatest variety of plants in containers?

A: Retired urologist Nick Saoi raises possibly hundreds of flowers, vegetables, herbs, and orchids in containers in his backyard, front yard, and four-season room at his home in Yankton. Originally from the Philippines, Dr. Saoi moved from Minneapolis to Yankton in 1963 where he practiced until 1998. While in practice, he often brought some of his plant containers to the well-lit waiting room for display in winter. Since his retirement, he has expanded his mobile garden varieties. Most containers he can hand carry; a few require more soil and are in larger tubs. "I used to move all the containers inside when not in use. I'm retired. I leave them outside."

"I'm like a car, I don't want to idle." He parlays his woodworking interest for bleacher display shelving for rows and rows of backyard flowers, hanging basket supports, and bird houses or feeders to add ambiance. "I always use a broom handle instead of my hands next to blades when woodworking with the table saw."

"No plow, no tiller, and no chemicals, or as little as possible," Saoi says of his container gardening. "I use about a tablespoon of fish emulsion per gallon of water as organic fertilizer about every two weeks in summer. I get it from Yankton Nurseries."

METHODS

Yellow, orange, pink, purple, and red are colors that splash Saoi's backyard. Tuberos begonias supply some of these colors. He reuses the tubers at the end of the season. "I dig the tuber and dry it with good air circulation. Gladiolas are done the same."

He brings a few container plants inside to the four-season room in the fall to continue to enjoy blooms and herbs such as thyme. "I fill up the indoor area. I also bring in parsley and regular and lemon mint."

One of Saoi's uses of mint is for tea. "I put two or three sprigs of mint with young tea leaves and a green tea bag in a mug with a cup of water. Microwave about two minutes, or until the mint leaves wilt, so you know the mint extract is in the tea." He shows these steps and offers the refreshing tea.

By March, he is ready to start transplants. "I plant seeds in plastic pack containers so they have better root systems." Among his favorites are 'Big Boy' and Brandywine for low acid and 'Sweet 100' yellow and red indeterminate tomatoes.

"I save the seed of the 'Sweet 100' tomatoes. I split the tomato and mash it in a strainer to remove most of the juice.

Then I wash the tomato pulp and seeds to separate them. Dry the seeds in the sun; on a sunny day, it may take only one day. Store them."

Watering all the containers in the summer is a process. "I water each container and fill the saucer beneath it with water. That way, there is a little extra water for each plant, by osmosis. They will last about a week."

Some of his plants are in multiple hanging baskets on poles. "Besides watering them, the plants need to be turned so that they maintain their shape. I found this swivel at Bomgaars that makes it easy to rotate each container easily." The metal swivel can attach to the hook and eye of hanging baskets and resembles the swivel on a dog leash.

As you might guess, Dr. Saoi is often outdoors in summer. "For mosquitoes, I wear this face net over my brimmed hat. I found it in the fishing department at Wal-Mart. It's an alternative to mosquito spray."

PLANTS FROM HOME

Certain plants have prominent spots in Dr. Saoi's yard. One area has several half wooden barrels filled with soil. "I use cement reinforcement wire for cages." The cages are taller than head height in the barrels and each supports a vine plant. "These Philippine beans grow well here. Each pod is over two feet long. The beans inside are dried and cooked, somewhat like pinto beans. I keep seeds. One of my former medical students writes that he has continued to grow these beans I shared with him."

Bitter melon is another vine plant growing in a half whiskey barrel with a tall wire cage. "I use it for stir fry."

ORCHIDS

Unique plants encouraged Dr. Saoi as he started gardening. "I found some plants in Hawaii when my children were in school there. They were certified by U.S. Department of Agriculture to bring back to the mainland. Of course, orchids are found throughout the world; their re-

quirements are standard. They need light, moving air, water, and 'orchid food' type fertilizer. I water an orchid container with 3-5 ice cubes when the medium is dry."

He uses alcohol on a cotton ball to wipe away orchid pests on leaves. "No pesticides. I quarantine the plant with a problem outside in the shade, or if winter, aside in the four-season room with ventilation."

Orchids bloom when you appreciate them most. "Some bloom a short time like Cattleya, and others bloom months at a time like Dendrobium and Phalaenopsis, but generally February through April. When it snows, you can see orchids in bloom. They think it's the tropics." It is easy to imagine his orchids in bloom around his four-season room.

Dr. Saoi says of the Philippine culture, "People grow a lot of kinds of plants there. One of my sons, David, also grows flowers." Dr. Saoi's yard and home reflect his interest in color and variety of plants.

How To Landscape A Historic Yankton Home

Q: What plants do you choose to landscape the yard of an 1886 house?

A: The Cramer-Kenyon Heritage Home (1886), 509 Pine St. in Yankton will be in bloom on its 125th birthday public celebration at the June 5th Cramer-Kenyon Garden Party, as Yankton also celebrates 150 years. When you pass by the home these days, several plants "garden sensitive to the era" or loosely called heritage plants display there.

"Pink Diamond" or light pink Darwin tulips line the white wooden entrance fence. This variety of tulips were the first to be hybridized," said Stan Hoffart, certified tree arborist and landscaper. Stan is also a Cramer-Kenyon board member and volunteer, along with Margaret and Jack Lyons.

"We go by the diaries of Alice Bulfinch Cramer to help decide what to put here," Margaret said. That's how the board chose the wooden fence.

"Quamash flowers (see them in beds in the yard) have hyacinth-like florets. Fields of quamash were reported by the Lewis & Clark expedition in the Northwest, as they ate the bulbs. They were introduced here in the late 1800's," Stan said.

"We like spring bulbs," Margaret said. "They're the first flowers you see."

Stan designed the Cramer-Kenyon landscape and the plantings since evolved, when the home opened to the public as a Yankton First Capital Bicentennial project in 1974. "Then the four lots (that comprise the yard) had three rows of Siberian elms, a couple of hackberry trees, the weeping mulberry, and some spirea shrubs. We removed all but the weeping mulberry that you see along the front fence and a few spirea shrubs."

"The diaries say that Mr. Cramer was pleased with the arching spirea," Margaret said. "He valued how long white flower branches cascade."

"Stan selected several trees for the yard," Jack said. Many of the plants are donated. "The Japanese lilac really stands out."

"Ornamental pear, though not so much heritage, may be in bloom," Margaret said, along with the flowering almond shrubs by the house foundation." They mentioned distinctive tall blue Baptisia or False Indigo by the house entrance.

"We have a Valley Forge elm

that is resistant to Dutch elm disease," Stan said, "and an arborvitae hedge, and a burr oak which I grew from a seedling."

"I was charged with making sure there would be spaces for social gatherings in the yard. We now have two outdoor rooms (designated with plants) with the gazebo as a focal point and another garden area in the back."

Another landscaping challenge was the functional driveway that enters near the front gate of the yard and goes to the back fence, appearing to separate the yard into halves. Stan installed a flowerbed near the driveway in mid-yard that draws the eye, stops focus on the line of the driveway. "It ties the halves into one cohesive yard."

"Soon tall blue campanula or bell flowers, irises, and asters will be in bloom in this bed," Stan said.

The color palate plan for the yard began as sunny yellow in

front to soft pink, rose, blues, and purples in back, and no reds."

"We try to ask Stan when we put new plants out," Margaret said, "because he had in mind soft colors instead of the pop colors of today. We try to be true to how he envisioned it."

Stan wanted to choose plants for the yard he called "garden sensitive to the era." His catalogs such as Van Engelen Inc. told when plants were introduced, and he had heritage plant catalogs,

but he was looking for what plants actually grew in yards in this region over a century ago.

"I interviewed my grandmother (who had lived in Plainview Nebraska) for what plants her mother grew. That's where the larkspur and irises we have here came from." He chose single hollyhocks instead of the more common double flowers of today. "New England asters planted here, came from a lady in Wayne Nebraska, and they came from her grandmother's yard. In fact, quite a few of the heritage plants were donated."



BRENDA K. JOHNSON

Pink Diamond tulips along the front wooden fence by the Cramer-Kenyon Heritage Home (1886) are an example of plants actually grown in that era.

2nd Annual
ABS Spring Flip

Tuesday, May 10
5:00-7:00pm

Calvary Baptist Church, 2401 Broadway, Yankton
Adults: \$6 • Children Under 7: \$4

Pancake Supper
Kid's Carnival
Raffles & Vendors

Entertainment by
Laurie Larson, Eunice Palu,
Shawn Coles, & Academy of Dance

Proceeds to benefit
Ability Building Services Activity Fund

May Plant Tips:

Jay Gurney, owner/nurseryman at Yankton Nurseries, 2000 Ferdig Ave., 605.665.6560, said, "May is for planting and weeding."

• **Early May Vegetables:** Plant outdoor cool weather seeds such as beets, carrots, kale, kohlrabi, leek, lettuce, mustard parsnip, pea, radish, spinach or turnip seeds. Set out garden plants such as broccolis, Brussel sprouts and cabbages.

• **Mid May Vegetables:** All of the above and sweet corn seed. Set out plants of disease-resistant tomatoes, peppers and squashes.

• **Late May Vegetables:** All of the above and set out garden plants of cantaloupes, eggplants, cucumbers, watermelons and sweet potatoes.

Gurney also offered tips for container planting. "Flower pots must have a drain hole. Use soil-less mix and fertilizer such as Miracle-Gro or Jack's Plant Food. The soil-less mix is lighter for lifting the pot, the roots breathe, and the mix doesn't compact. Purchase plants that are young, stocky and hardened-off."

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