

Area Gardeners Enjoy Digging In At Community Plots

Drought of 2012 and hail of 2011 affected some gardens in the region more than others. In early July, these gardeners at the community plots were willing to talk about their vegetables, their collaboration with other gardeners, and share tips with readers. By late August, signs of second plantings, continuing harvest, and creative plot décor had developed.

BY BRENDA K. JOHNSON
P&D Correspondent

On a hot mid-summer morning at the Healthy Yankton Community Gardens along West City Limits Road, gardeners had produce and pride of labor to show for their efforts.

Dave Abbott has lived in Yankton since 1980. "This is our third year (at the community gardens). We're new at gardening," Abbott said. "Didn't want to tear up the backyard to put in a garden, so we figured we'd do this."

"I ride my scooter over here every morning. I use it for going around town. It gets 90 miles to the gallon," he said.

"I'm retired, so I'm here around 10:00AM. I come to water and also some tomatoes are starting to get ripe. As hot as it's been, you want to keep the garden clean. Too hot for lettuce and radishes; they burned up. I'm more of a tomato and pepper guy anyway."

His plants are surrounded with grass clippings from home to retain moisture and prevent weeds. Abbott started his garden near the end of April and added tomato plants in May.

TIP: "For tomatoes and peppers, I had five gallon buckets with the bottoms out that (centered) on each plant. It protects the plants from wind." It also temporarily holds and directs water to the plant roots. As plants are established, he removed the buckets and stored them for next year.

Jerry Hemmer of Yankton works at a local manufacturing company. "That's my and my wife's scooter. We live less than a mile from here, so we buzz over here and water," Hemmer said. This is their third year at the community gardens.

The Hemmers' tomato vines are robust and harvest is beginning in early July. They planted them in mid May. The garden includes potatoes, bell peppers, cherry tomatoes, cucumber, onion, and radishes. First cucumber harvest is today.

"This will work well in my wife's salad tomorrow," he said. "I just visited the Yankton Farmer's Market this morning for sweet corn, and they were out of tomatoes."



PHOTO: BRENDA K. JOHNSON

Leon Preszler and his wife Suzanne of Yankton grow heirloom tomatoes such as this Jaune Flamme, among other vegetables fresh for eating.

Hemmers' potatoes have history. "Last year we planted Yukon Gold. From two rows, we harvested not quite ten pounds of potatoes. We had some of them left this spring, so I planted them. So what you see here are about tennis ball size now, and are from last year's crop. We had hoped to plant them earlier. As soon as the gardens opened, we planted the next weekend."

Because they signed up at the requested time, Hemmers have had the same plots all three years. "When I mow grass from home, I dump the grass in the garden to keep weeds down," he said. "Yankton Transfer Station has a big pile of compost (for gardeners). I put six or eight garbage cans on this plot last fall. That's really great for the City of Yankton to have that. It's free for the taking."

Hemmer thinks the compost is beneficial. "The compost made the soil more fluffy or easier to dig. It seems easier to work or till." Because the soil is less compact, he thinks water can penetrate easier.

Chemicals for the plants are minimal. "So far, I added Sevin dust on potato plants for insects and Miracle-Gro for Gardens (fertilizer) once after planting," he said.

Gardening here is worthwhile to Hemmer. "You get to socialize when you come out here with neighbors. We can pick vegetables when we want. It makes you feel good. My onions produced so well last year that I shared with other gardeners whose onions weren't ready. I exercise and get outside."

TIP: Onions grow well for Hemmer. "I plant Walla Walla onion sets. After they are established, I wash the soil away from the bulbs, so only the roots are in the ground. The soil doesn't restrict the bulb. We've harvested several already. When I planted the sets, I put them close together and then pull every other one for table onions to thin them."

"I don't know who is responsible for the idea of the community gardens," he said, "but it's great! I'd like to thank them and hope it continues. It's great to see more plots added. Some plant flowers. It's fun to see what your neighbors do differently in the garden than you."

Hemmers' garden was hailed out last year. "Hail put holes in my peppers. Tomatoes were beaten down. Gardening was over after the hailstorm. It was disappointing but makes me appreciate this year even more. I drive by (the garden grounds) by taking West City Limits Road every day. In winter with snow here, I think, I can't wait for spring to get out and garden!"

Ron Hunhoff of Yankton lives in Yankton and has been retired nine years. This is his first year at the community gardens, although he has grown large gardens in the past.

"My wife and I garden," Hunhoff said. "I enjoy watching it grow. She decides what we plant. The heat is killing us. Beans are woody, not from lack of water, but from heat. Squash blossoms fell off but are now re-setting."

TIP: He says that grass clippings from home help retain moisture,

deter weeds, and cool the soil.

Hunhoff sends thanks to Mark's Machinery for tilling all the gardens. A lag between when the gardens were tilled and the opening day of the gardens didn't deter him. Hunhoff planted his garden the next day with potatoes, cucumbers, and beans.

"I held back planting tomatoes until mid May," he said. "I did a lot of canning before. Now I'm doing this garden to have fresh vegetables for us. What we can't handle, we'll give away."

Leon Preszler of Yankton is busy staking tall sturdy tomato cages. "Cages fall over because the tomato plants get so big," Preszler said.

"We have all heirloom tomatoes except for one Celebrity plant. We harvest tomatoes for eating (fresh). We've grown heirlooms for four or five years and weed out the ones that don't produce here. We get plants from several sources."

TIP: "Our heirloom tomatoes are Aunt Ruby's German Green, Pruden's Purple, Chocolate cherry tomato, Black Krim, Brandywine, Cherokee Purple, and Jaune Flamme," Preszler said. His wife Suzanne enjoys preparing food with them and was interviewed last year at the gardens.

Preszler uses a steel fence post to stabilize the tomato cages. "Last year the wind blew the cages over," he said. The post appears to add stability without adding much space inside the cage.

Their tomatoes and peppers are robust. "Last year the tomato vines shaded the peppers. Now we know they needed sun," he said. They started their garden in late May.

"We put landscape cloth down (around the plants) and it holds the moisture in. And we put grass clippings around the plants. Weeds come when you don't have time," Preszler said.

They divide up working at the garden. "Whoever's got time," he said. "We water every two or three days. It's not hard to water now because you can pick something."

He says heirloom tomatoes require care similar to other tomatoes. "When heirlooms start getting ripe, you need to pick them. Some can rot quickly. They last well at the house. Leave them out of the refrigerator."

"I got into gardening since we moved to Yankton," he said. "I farmed and ranched before—no time to garden. Even with the heat, it's going well. You come here to the gardens in the morning and it's a different environment. It's fun to see what grows around us."

Bob Wubben works for Parks and Recreation in the City of Yankton. He and his wife have had a plot

here for three years, but this is his first time gardening.

"I didn't have an interest in gardening but my wife enjoys it," Wubben said.

TIP: "But now (when the squash leaves wilt) I get on the Internet to see what's going on. Mom was a farm wife. She had a huge vegetable and flower garden."

Wubben is surprised that plants keep growing with little moisture. (Later in July and August, production did slow for many gardeners.)

"Thank God for the access to water out here! I enjoy looking at how different people do different things with gardens. The gentleman over there has a fence and structure for plants to climb. I learned a few things last year from a gentleman (with a plot nearby) who talked about what to plant and how you pair plants. I've learned a lot listening and visiting with other people out here."

Wubben added a sign to their plot: Gardening is cheaper than therapy. "It is relaxing coming out here at night, even just pulling weeds; it's a change of pace."

Their early July garden is producing peppers, zucchini, onions, cucumbers, and beans. "We started out small and each year try a few new things," he said. They have two plots now.

"My main job is to weed and water. My wife knows what is going on more than I do. I listen to her. I enjoy it here. Every year you learn something new. I grew up on a farm so it's my way of staying in contact with farming. I like being outside; I love summer," Wubben concluded. He left to compare notes with Ron Hunhoff about wilting squash leaves.

HEALTHY YANKTON GROUP AND OTHER VOLUNTEERS

Some community garden visitors and even gardeners with plots wonder at how these gardens have been so successful. Cooperation among gardeners working there may have contributed harmony.

Healthy Yankton Group, the City of Yankton, and other volunteers have established the site, maintained it each season, interacted with gardeners during the season. They provided oversight for sign-up, plot rules, and amenities such as drinking water, taps for watering, and the parking area and latrine shared with the dog park nearby.

"We have 220 plots this year for gardeners," Susan Thorson said. Thorson is Director of Student Health Services at Mount Marty College and Healthy Yankton member. "We have met the maximum number of plots available for the garden area. Gardening went well except for the

extreme drought conditions that plagued us in the Yankton area. Gardeners did have access to water for the gardens but it was still hard to keep up with the watering (due to) high environmental temperatures we experienced throughout the summer. Unfortunately, weeds continue to grow so the weeds around the gardens have been trimmed periodically through the summer."

"We are planning Fall 2012 Garden Cleanup for the middle of October and would really appreciate the gardeners cleaning up their individual plots," Thorson said. "There is an area at the south end of the garden to place the garden debris. We ask the gardeners to review the Healthy Yankton Community Garden rules as a reminder to make sure everything is completed as requested. We are planning for Mark Hunhoff, a volunteer, to complete the fall plowing when the gardens are cleaned up."

Healthy Yankton acknowledged many volunteers who assisted them. "Missouri Valley Master Gardeners were at the gardens each week and cared for flowerbeds," Thorson said. "Mark Hunhoff of Mark's Machinery completed spring and fall tilling of the gardens. Mark Johnson, engineer for Eisenbraun & Associates and crew surveyed and marked the garden with permanent markers. Jim Thorson, head men's basketball coach at Mount Marty College and the Lancer Men's Basketball Team measured and marked each plot this spring. Yankton Trustee Unit painted and created scenes with garden quotes as garden markers. The City of Yankton, Parks & Recreation, under the direction of Todd Larson, mowed grass areas, cleaned up garden debris, and kept the water system functioning during summer months. Many 2012 gardeners also assisted with garden prep work prior to opening this season."

Registrations for 2012 gardeners wanting to renew their current plot will take place in January of 2013 and in March for new gardeners, according to Angie O'Connor, Healthy Yankton Group leader. She asked that interested gardeners please watch for details on the Healthy Yankton website: www.healthyyankton.org

Healthy Yankton Group includes Angie O'Connor of Avera Sacred Heart Wellness Center, Lois Halbur of Lewis & Clark Behavioral Health Services and South Dakota Human Services, Susan Thorson of Mount Marty College, Sister Julie Peak of Sacred Heart Monastery, Todd Larson of Yankton City Parks & Recreation, Cindy Nelson a master gardener, Tammy Matuska, formerly of The Center served on the board in the last year but is now in private insurance business.

YANKTON GOP OPENS CAMPAIGN OFFICE



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Yankton County Republicans opened a new office at 314 Walnut. Tentative hours are noon-6 p.m. The phone number is 260-0526. Yard signs can be picked up and volunteers are welcome. Meetings are 5:30 p.m. each Monday thru the election. Pictured are: Greg Adamson, Chair; Roger Meyer, City Committeeman; Van Pace; Brian and Kay Adam; Julie Stotz, Secretary; and Brad Butzlaff. Not pictured are Deb Bodendstedt, Vice Chair; Tom Stotz, Treasurer; and Jane Adamson, Committeewoman.

MEETINGS

LILLEHAMMER LODGE #1-633 SONS OF NORWAY

Sept. 18, 2012, the Lillehammer Lodge #1-633 of the Yankton area met at Christ the King Lutheran Church in Yankton. The meeting was opened by President, Carol Broderson leading the group in the national anthems of the United States and Norway accompanied by Phyllis Nielsen and also the flag pledge of Allegiance of the United States of America. Music director, Phyllis N., accompanied and led the Lodge in singing "Nedelvin" in English and Norwegian.

The minutes of the last meeting were approved as read. The Treasurer's report, by Clarice Holm, was given and approved.

Members were requested to be thinking of taking part in the Lodge proceedings as an officer. Alma and Charles Logdahl had consented to be the greeters, taking the place of John Grindvold and his wife, Elvira (who passed away recently).

Mardell Antes picked up some packets of clipped stamps for Tubfrim and requested that the persons trimming them

remember to leave 1/2 inch around them.

Viona Ranney talked about some of her travels to Europe and escorting a group to Norway, Sweden and Denmark recently.

Some discussion was held on changing the meeting date to Saturday's year-round, possibly not meeting in winter or summer months — more discussion to be held at the next meeting.

Members are reminded at this time that the next meeting will be Oct. 20, a Saturday afternoon with lunch being a pot-luck. The program for the Oct. meeting will be a talk about the Shannon Trail in the near-by Neb. area.

The meeting was adjourned and Marlys List led the Norwegian table prayer, the birthday names were read and lunch was then served.

AVERA CLUB TOASTMASTERS 6217

Toastmaster Fran Kocer asked, "With all the leaving blowing sideways in this wind, why spend all that time on your hair?" when he called the Avera Club 6217 to order on windy Oct. 4 at noon in the Benedictine Center. Kocer thanked Steve Anderson for leading the invocation

requesting "understanding of others".

Melissa Bader presented a key note address that she had given upon closing ceremonies for the Yankton Chamber of Commerce Leadership Program in 2005. She noted the \$2 billion spent daily during the Iraq War and the inspiration given by a young boy who saved his siblings during Hurricane Katrina. Bader received the Best Speaker trophy.

Master Evaluator Tim Bohn suggested that we all learn to listen better. Bohn's team listened for the word of the day via Joe Neuhalfen's "placate:" listened for the timer's report from Greg Stach; listened for Jen Hovland to drop the nails on unneeded "ah," and listened to Muriel Stach's evaluation of Bader's address, whereupon Stach won the Best Evaluator award.

'Tiny Tots' Play Club To Start At SAC

Starting the first week in November, the Summit Activities Center will be offering a Tiny Tots Play Club through the winter months on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings from 9-11 a.m.

Come in for a stay and play place for preschool children and their grown-ups to shake off those cooped-up blues.

Tuesday and Thursday mornings will be open play time in the gym and Wednesday mornings both the gym and Summit Activities Center pool will be available for play time.

For further information, please stop by the Summit Activities Center at 1801 Summit or call 668-5234. Don't forget to follow the Yankton Parks and Recreation on Facebook.

Table Topics Master MaryAnn Wortmann also had the group listening to her current events impromptu questions. She asked Jane Miller about any rare family keepsakes; Greg Stach for Jimmy Hoffa's whereabouts; David Fiebelkorn if voter identifications are really needed; Eileen O'Connor's ideas on lower birthrates among teens; and MJ Rogers' experiences with composting. Rogers received the Best Respondent trophy when he commented upon "the green, blue and brown bins as eyesores in his yard."

Under announcements, Club Treasurer Kary Beltz requested dues and Stach's Halloween Contest song, "The Lord made me ... a black land farmer" was dedicated to member Stan Sudbeck.

We want to make you a loan!
\$100 - \$3000

GENTRY FINANCE
228 Capital • Yankton
605-665-7955

CONVENIENT LOAN
1818 Broadway Suite D-1 • Yankton
605-665-1640



KYNT
AM 1450
MORNING COFFEE
WEEKDAYS MONDAY-FRIDAY
Friday, October 12
7:40 am SD Magazine (Heidi Marsh)
8:15 am MMC Lancer Club (Chuck Iverson)

Johnson Electric, LLP
214 CAPITAL ST., YANKTON
COMMERCIAL • RESIDENTIAL • TRENCHING
605-665-5686
Gary R. Johnson
Rick Merkel • Ben Merkel

OCTOBER 11-31

25% OFF*
(with coupon)

PAINT

SHERWIN-WILLIAMS

STORE HOURS:
MON - FRI: 7 AM TO 7 PM
SAT: 8 AM TO 6 PM
SUN: 10 AM TO 6 PM
Store hours may vary. See store for details.

To locate a Sherwin-Williams® store near you visit sherwin-williams.com or call 1-800-4-SHERWIN.

Bring this coupon in & save!

SAVE 25%* ON PAINT

SAVE 15%* ON PAINTING SUPPLIES

SHERWIN-WILLIAMS

SAVE 30%*
on DeckScapes® Deck Stains & WoodScapes® Wood Stains

*Retail sales only. Discount taken off of full retail price. Sale pricing or other offers that result in greater savings will supersede this offer. Limit one per household. Excludes Multi-Purpose primers, Minwax® Wood Finishes Quarts, ladders, spray equipment & accessories & gift cards. Other exclusions may apply. See store or sherwin-williams.com for details. Must surrender coupon at time of redemption. Cash value: 1/100 of 1¢. Not valid on previous purchases. Void if copied, transferred, purchased or sold. Valid at Sherwin-Williams and Sherwin-Williams operated retail paint stores only. Not valid in Canada. Offer valid 10/11-10/31/12. © 2012 The Sherwin-Williams Company.