



COURTESY PHOTO
Carol Smith of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will discuss food, water and shelter needs of a variety of common birds and pollinators that you may want to attract to your backyard.

Smith Set For Master Gardener Event In Yankton

All are invited to Carol Smith's presentation about what birds and pollinators require to attract them to your urban or country backyard.

Her talk is Tuesday, Oct. 6, from 7-8 p.m. at the Pavilion Auditorium of the Avera Sacred Heart Campus. The auditorium is located at Fourth St. at Summit Ave. in Yankton. Missouri Valley Master Gardeners sponsor talks twice a year for the public.

Smith has served as a fish and wildlife biologist with United States Fish and Wildlife Service for the past thirty-seven years. Currently she is a National Park Service liaison and works on a team with United States Corps of Engineers on the development of the Missouri River Recovery Management Plan and support staff for the Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee.

Smith is passionate about birds and pollinators and what is needed for their optimal habitat.

"If we provide food, water, shelter and a place to raise young, wildlife will survive. We will have wildlife around us, and a healthy environment," she said.

"It's our responsibility to take care of our environment. We are stewards, and wildlife is God's creation. If we take care of them, what is good for wildlife is good for us."

Smith will show examples of common birds and habitats they need. She will discuss "do's and don'ts" for what and where to plant. Audience members will be invited to ask questions. Smith will share a list of resources for attracting birds and pollinators to your backyard.

Plant Exchange

BY BRENDA K. JOHNSON
P&D Correspondent

Gardens may have many purposes. Most of Jorja Fejfar's yard and garden is in active use for enjoyment. Her yard is where several members of her family spend daily life in summer, along with an occasional visiting neighbor. Jorja works for Head Start and her husband Brian works at the Yankton Federal Prison Camp. The couple lives in Yankton.

Jorja is a native of Yankton who grew up on a block where all the kids gathered. Now she and Brian live on a corner lot with several mature shade trees. They have a sunny vegetable and flower garden in the wide green space between street and sidewalk. They have seven children and several are youngsters who play in the yard on a beautiful day.

The yard has three tall swings from tree limbs, other outdoor toys and a tree house Brian built and placed on a tall elm tree stump.

"Squirrels throw walnuts at the kids in the tree house. Sometimes kids catch the walnuts and throw them back," Jorja said. Their children and neighbor kids play in the fort.

"I like calling this 'kid's corner,'" she said. "I'll be inside, no one out here, and a kid appears." One day she spotted a kid on his bike looking around.

"He sat in the swing by the sidewalk. He must have sat there seven minutes before he spotted me in the window. Then he jumped up and left. Lots of kids come around," she said. There's also a bench that an older neighbor uses when he rests after a walk. Cherry tomatoes are planted at hand level for anyone who wants to pop a bit of summer in his mouth as he walks by.

One of the mature trees in the yard has a fieldstone ring around it filled in with white sand and newly planted hens and chicks.

"My daughter is in National Guard and we got to go to Georgia seven years ago when my grandson was born," she said. "I brought back a bucket of sand and never did anything with it."

Fieldstones around the tree and edging the gardens came from Brian's mother and stepfather's farm near Taber.

"Truck was dragging on the way back," she said. "On one trip to pick rock (for the yard) we took Brian's 88 year old grandmother. We had a four wheeler to get to the rock—she had so much fun!"

A mature hackberry in their yard has a hole in the trunk at waist level that is large enough to fit a birdcage inside for décor. She moves the birdcage and points to a hackberry sprout growing inside the tree.

"Jay Gurney (Yankton Nurseries) told me that the only way this hackberry sprout could grow here (naturally) is that it grows from this tree's roots or pass through a bird's digestive system first. (Bird's stomach) breaks down the seed so it can grow." How the sprout got there and grows there is a marvel. She's noticed a yellow bird with a teardrop shaped nest that visits the tree often.

Beyond the hackberry tree is their vegetable and flower garden area. Fieldstones line the beds. She planted marigolds once and now they re-seed in various parts of the garden. She works around these flowers she plants.

"I like to leave a spot in the garden where my kids or grandkids can dig while I'm out here," she said. "I'd rather be outside than inside. I spend every minute I can out here. Sometimes I'm out here in the dark because the street-



PHOTOS: BRENDA K. JOHNSON

ABOVE: Fejfar children pause for a moment on a summer evening of play in a yard and garden made for active use. 'I'd rather be outside than inside,' said Jorja Fejfar of Yankton. Kid-friendly yard of mature shade trees and a sunny area for garden provides them plenty to do. BELOW LEFT: A mature hackberry tree in Fejfar's yard has a hole in the base of the trunk reminiscent of a scene from a Harry Potter adventure. Jorja inserted a birdcage and greenery for décor. BELOW RIGHT: Near the vegetable and flowerbeds Jorja places whimsical décor. A re-purposed lamp base is the stand for a bird/feeder relish tray. Western boot planters are nearby.



light is near."

Soil in her garden is somewhat sandy, compacts easily and becomes hard as a rock. To improve the soil where she grows tomatoes and peppers, she has 10 or 12" drainage pipe that Brian cut into sections. The sections are partially buried and filled with a mixture of Moisture Control Miracle-Gro potting soil and natural soil. Plants inside the pipe sections have weather protection.

"Water stays with the plant when you water," she said. An idea she saw on the Internet to help plants with moisture was to put the moisture beads from diapers in the bottom of the pipe with the soil mixture. She tried the idea this season to see if more moisture stays with the plants. But hand watering is a challenge.

"I have a small kid's swimming pool that sets out here. I believe in recycling. I got a little pump and used the water (after the kids played in it) to water the plants," she said.

She plants a variety of red and yellow tomatoes in four rows. She has found the rabbits do not eat the plants with drainage pipe around them. She also plants sweet and hot peppers and onions. She cans salsa.



"On the day I can, I pick what is ripe and put it together. I use the salsa in chili and goulash too."

She is careful to keep the jalapeno pepper plants out of reach of small children. When her fifteen year old was a baby, the young child liked to help her mother pick tomatoes.

"One day when I got her inside she had welts on her the shape of my hands. I ran her to the Emergency Room," she said. She took the peppers she had been touching with her. Her baby's skin had a reaction to the peppers but didn't affect her.

"I named them 'Avera' peppers. The peppers were so hot in that batch of salsa that I couldn't eat them."

The garden beds extend to the street curb. Plants are placed so that they don't obstruct drivers near their street intersection. One year Fejfar's asked the city engineer about this and are careful about the heights of plants.

Some annual flowers in her garden re-seed themselves. Marigolds are here and there among the rows. Jorja thinks they hold back mosquitos and gnats. She works around volunteer plants, giving a "live and let live" air to the garden. Not everyone treats Fejfar's yard and gardens that way.

Jorja had painted bowling balls to resemble a rack of colorful billiard balls that she placed by the gardens as décor. She shows a photo of them. All ten of them disappeared from their yard. She continues to place décor here and there. Old western boots become planters for flowers.

By now Jorja's annual flower seeds have been stored in Mason jars for next year.

"I take the flower heads off (to save seed). Cosmos is one of my daughter's favorites so I plant those. Snapdragons are another daughter's favorite so I save those seeds to plant," Jorja said. Zinnias are one of Jorja's favorites. They're all ready for next season.

Share tips from your outdoor or indoor plant experience, give us a tour of your plant site, or let us know what you enjoy most about these plants and people who grow them. Contact news@yankton.net Attn: Brenda Johnson or write P&D, 319 Walnut St, Yankton, SD 57078, Attn: Brenda Johnson. See "Plant Exchange" blog on Facebook or www.brendakjohnsonplantexchange.wordpress.com/.

Autumn: It's A Wrap!

BY MARY ANN KING
Master Gardener

The calendar is telling me to ready my garden for the wintertime freezes. Early frosts, drying winds and sudden mid-winter warming spells can be hard on newly planted specimens or marginally hardy plants. Hungry deer and rodents can also do considerable damage to even established gardens.

A garden's best friend is a heavy blanket of snow after the plants have gone dormant. With no guarantee that the snows will come in a timely fashion, a few simple techniques will allow one to successfully over-winter tender plants.

I like to "mulch in" the garden bed after the plants have died back. After giving a good watering, rake-over a mixture of cedar mulch and dried shredded leaves, blanketing perennials about 4 inches deep. This is helpful even for established gardens, aiding moisture retention and protecting the ground from heaving during the winter when the temperature rises and falls.

For individual plant protection, form chicken wire into a circle, place the cage around the plant or shrub, and then stake in place and fill with dry leaves.

Those hard drying winds can freeze-dry tender shrubs or small immature trees and a protective burlap cover works very well. Waiting until the planting dies back for the winter, place wooden stakes into the ground at its base, then wrap with a layer of burlap. To keep the burlap in place, staple along the wooden support structure.

This method, along with commercially available tree wraps, also works well to prevent the intense winter sun from "scalding" the tree bark. Some new trees will require covering for two winters. Never use plastic wrap, as it will create a harmful, hothouse environment. Stakes and burlap can also be formed into a windbreak to protect a particularly vulnerable part of the garden.

Hungry nibbling deer, rabbits and rodents are also a serious threat to trees and shrubs. Unless you have a large number of young trees and shrubs to protect, fencing individual plants is the easiest and most economical. To fence a plant, drive stakes into the ground about 48 inches from the trunk, or far enough away to prevent feeding on the lower branches. Attach wire or plastic mesh to these stakes to form a circular fence. Young trees should be fenced



PHOTO: BRENDA K. JOHNSON

Mary Ann King shows her wrapped, newly planted redbud tree last year. She waits until plants are dormant, have died back or lost leaves at the end of the season before winter freeze to install protective wraps, often late October or November.

every fall until their primary branches are 5 feet tall. Check the fencing throughout the winter, especially after heavy snowfalls; deer can walk across hardened snow and feed on the tree branches.

For rodents and rabbits, wrapping individual tree trunks with rabbit-proof wraps is effective. Since rabbits and rodents can dig, bury the wrap in the ground at the base of

the trees. For shrubs, placing and staking a cage of fine wire covering the entire plant works well.

Chemical repellents can be used but need re-application all winter long, especially after rain or wet snow. Extremely hungry deer and rabbits are not deterred by repellants. Remove all protection in the spring after the last frost!

Dibbles And Bits

- "Plantings to Attract Birds to Your Backyard" talk will be presented by Carol Smith of the National Park Service on Tuesday, Oct. 6, at 7 p.m.

Presentation is held at the Pavilion Auditorium of the Avera Sacred Heart Campus, 4th St at Summit Avenue, Yankton, SD 57078. Free admission but donations are welcome to offset presentation costs and for community projects.

- Regional "food hub" of southeastern South Dakota plans are progressing. Local food producers are closer to the proposed 2016 start up for a food hub that includes the Yankton area.

"Dakota Fresh," the producer-owned limited partnership (LLC) will provide restaurants, institutions, grocers, etc. of this region with fresh local food. Weekly food orders are anticipated. These producers' goal is to deliver high quality food consistently. Food producer partnership agreements will soon be signed.

Twenty-five Southeastern South Dakota producers have participated in planning to date. Food buyers were recently invited to attend receptions in Yankton, Wagner, Sioux Falls, and Brookings to hear about Dakota Fresh.

Thirty professionals came from schools, restaurants, bakeries, grocers, and various food catering services.

Next "Dakota Fresh" will look for a part-time food hub manager who will communicate, market, and deliver foods. The local food produc-

ers will also locate a warehouse to aggregate the food. Kari O'Neill, South Dakota State University (SDSU) Extension community development specialist has facilitated the Food Hub planning process through SDSU Extension. Partnering has included South Dakota Department of Agriculture, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development, USDA Agricultural Marketing Service, Dakota Rural Action, and South Dakota Specialty Producers.

Contact O'Neill at (605) 685-6972 for more information.

- "Backyard Birds of South Dakota" is a free color booklet available at the South Dakota Game Fish and Parks website. Some gardeners choose yard plants to attract birds and this guide gives habitat information.



AM 1450
MORNING COFFEE
WEEKDAYS MONDAY-FRIDAY

Friday, October 2
7:40 am Manufacturing Week (KPI)
8:20 am Yankton Area Arts (Julie Amsberry)