

Yellowstone Master  
Gardeners  
P.O. Box 35021  
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# YELLOWSTONE COUNTY MASTER GARDENER



We want to hear from you -Send your submissions for newsletter to [ynergarden-er@gmail.com](mailto:ynergarden-er@gmail.com) by March 15th for the next issue.

Newsletter

Volume 12 Issue 1

Jan., Feb., March 2023

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- ◆ Corry Mordeaux
- ◆ Pamela Jones

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## BORN A FARMER

~By Sheri Kisch

Born into farming and ranching families, both Marilyn and Gordon Lockwood have continued a much-loved tradition. Marilyn grew up helping her mom in the garden with all its duties, also preserving the produce even to this day at home in Shepherd. Their farming and ranching started in Illinois, then moved to ranching in Wisconsin and then on to fulfill Gordon's dream of living in Montana where they have lived for the past 45 years.

Marilyn's life has always had a garden included. She can definitely tell homegrown flavor versus store bought. Another plus is that she knows what chemicals (or not) have been used on her produce. Spot treatments are used for really tough weeds on her property. Bindweed and purslane fall into her "most disliked" category. "They really try your patience," she says.

Marilyn usually starts seeds in March in her greenhouse, depending on the plant. What a delight to see a green seedling emerge from the soil and grow into the many plants she uses for her yard and garden. What is her favorite flower? "Flowers". I get it! She likes to try different plants like hibiscus, cotton, tobacco, quinoa, or even peanuts. Some plants were tried three times until success was achieved. The tall tobacco was a crowd pleaser at the Metra Garden.

Being an active member of the Huntley Project Garden Club keeps her busy. They plant, water, weed, and change out planters for the different seasons in Worden & Huntley and several public gardens that they tend. One of the club's field trips was to Tom Kress' Garden where she found so much information. The garden and Tom made a lasting impression.



*Continued on page 2 -*

Her friend, Corry Mordeaux, introduced Marilyn to the Master Gardener Program where she has been quite active in the square foot garden competition and plantings. One of her first endeavors was to do the straw bale gardening at the greenhouse in the education gardens at the Metra. She liked it so well that she did it for another five years at home in her own garden. There is so much to learn about gardening, not only from the many classes available but just visiting with fellow gardeners.



She encourages new members to go to all the activities that you can because you learn something from every person you encounter. When people ask her garden questions, or what is wrong with my plant, she reminds them that “the first thing you do is to find out what is causing your problem”. Is it an insect, disease, water or nutrient problem? Go online. There are good Extension websites from Montana, Colorado, Minnesota and Pennsylvania.

With winter here, she spends most of her time in her sewing room and searching through the many garden catalogs in search of unusual plants to grow the following year.

She says that gardening is just in her blood and will probably do it until she can't move anymore. It is certainly a rewarding and fun hobby.

## Recipes

### ROASTED CELERIAC AND POTATO SOUP

2 Lb. celeriac (celery root), peeled and cubed  
1 leek cleaned and cut into 1" pieces  
1 tsp salt  
¼ tsp pepper  
¼ tsp cumin and/or turmeric  
¼ cup avocado oil

2 large carrots, peeled and cubed  
2 cloves garlic, peeled  
5 cups chicken broth, divided  
4 medium potatoes, peeled and cubed  
½ cup heavy cream

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Peel and cube vegetables to ½-¾" pieces. Try to keep them the same size for roasting. Combine celeriac, carrots, potatoes, leek, garlic, and oil in a large bowl. Sprinkle with seasonings. Stir to combine. Spread out on prepared baking sheet.

Roast vegetables in oven until cooked through, stirring every 15 minutes for 40-60 minutes.

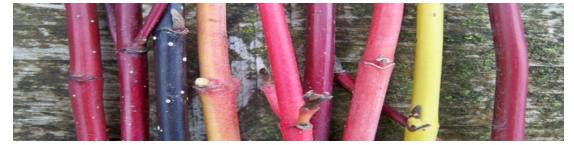
Place half the roasted veggies in a large blender adding one then two more cups broth, blending for 1 minute till smooth.

Pour mixture into a large saucepan over medium heat. Add remaining veggies and broth and blend till smooth. Add to the saucepan and heat till warmed through. Stir in heavy cream.



## Red Twig Dogwood

~Submitted by Ann McKean



There are at least three dogwood species called redbtwig dogwood. The most common are *Cornus sericea*, formerly (and sometimes still) known as *stolonifera*, common name red-osier or American dogwood, *Cornus alba*, recently changed to *sericea* and also known as Tartarian or European Dogwood, and *Cornus sanguinea*, with the common names European, Asian, or bloodtwig dogwood. While the first two are common in the nursery industry, the third is harder to find because of its rapid leggy growth and less vivid stem color. All three species have beautiful cultivars that have been developed by breeders for commercial use.

*Cornus sericea* cultivars include Bailey's which can grow up to 6-8', Isanti, which has a shrubbier profile and grows 4-5', and Arctic Fire and Arctic Fire Yellow, two newer dwarf cultivars, both of which have long straight growth that reaches 4-5'. There are many others, including Flaviramia with shrubby yellow stems and a 6-8' height and Budd's yellow with a 5-8' height and erect stems. Kelsyi is a low, delicate mounded dwarf variety that prefers moist shade.

*Cornus alba* cultivars include Ivory Halo, which is popular for its variegated leaves, Neon Burst and Garden Glow with chartreuse leaves, and Baton Rouge and Cardinal, whose stems can be almost neon red in the perfect light. *Cornus alba* is no longer a taxonomically accepted designation. They are now grouped under *Cornus sericea* subsp. *sericea*. That change will take quite awhile to trickle down through the commercial market, so don't worry about remembering it just yet!

*Cornus sanguinea* cultivars include Midwinter Sun and Arctic Sun. Both have yellow, red-tipped stems. All redbtwig dogwoods are extremely hardy, ranging from zones 2 to 4, and although they are an important browse plant for deer, they can withstand the odd nibble. I count on the deer to keep mine from getting too tall! They also provide forage for our pollinators with their white blossoms and white winter berries for the birds. To maintain the best winter stem color, cut 1/3 of the stems to the ground in late winter every year (or cut them for Christmas decorating) or cut the entire shrub to the ground no more than every three years. I recommend the 1/3 every year since that is easier on the plant and less disruptive for your garden appearance.

Since it tolerates wetland conditions, redbtwig dogwood is a great raingarden plant for full sun or part shade, although it may need an occasional watering if the area remains very dry for an extended period. *Cornus alba* prefers moist well-drained soil, while *Cornus sericea* is more adaptable to different conditions and is therefore probably the best raingarden candidate. *Cornus sanguinea* requires well-drained soil and prefers full sun.

Although the nomenclature has changed to join the European and the American varieties on paper, the European varieties are not native, and if I'm being a stickler about natives, I will choose the American *Cornus sericea* varieties over the *alba*. They are also the easiest going in the garden and best adapted to our soils and fauna. It would stand to reason that our wildlife is also adapted to them.

The bottom line is that there are many beautiful varieties of redbtwig dogwood available to the modern gardener, so after you choose the variety that best fits your priorities and will thrive in your particular garden conditions, sit back and enjoy the year round beauty.

<https://landscapeplants.oregonstate.edu/plants/cornus-alba>  
<https://landscapeplants.oregonstate.edu/plants/cornus-sericea>





## Successful BCSL programming for 2022 and Planning for 2023

~Submitted by Elizabeth Waddington

Fall educational programs from the Billings Community Seed Library included composting with worms and winter tree and shrub care.

In November, Gainan's Heights Flower and Garden Center provided space for Scott Meyers from the Yellowstone Arboretum, which is on the grounds of ZooMontana, who came to talk about the history, growth, and future plans of the Arboretum. It is essentially an in-place laboratory for the natural consequences of species growing in this region. While they do occasionally try a variety not native to the area, they are careful not to introduce invasive species and have removed many Russian Olive trees. They are always looking for volunteers and you can find more information about the organization at <https://www.yellowstonearboretum.org/> (Hint: in keeping with our digital resources theme, you can use their compendium of trees to identify and read about the trees they care for on the zoo grounds.) He also gave tips on prepping your trees and shrubs for winter weather.



Upcoming topics for education programs include Big Yield Small Spaces (Jan 21), Healthy Soil with Danny and Mike Choriki (Feb 11) and Seed Starting and Seed Swap (Mar 11). These programs will be held at the Billings Public Library. You can find information about the upcoming programs on the library website, <https://billingslibrary.org/358/EVENTS> or the BCSL Facebook page, <https://www.facebook.com/BillingsCommunitySeedLibrary>

### Veggies, flowers, herbs, greens, and more!

The seed cabinet is located on the 2nd floor of Billings Public Library right outside the door to the Genealogy Room. It is available for perusal during library hours. Please enjoy the bounty of seed packets donated by area merchants: Home Depot, West End Walmart, Billings Nursery, Roots Garden Center, Gainan's Heights Flower and Garden Center.



Specific seed varieties vary depending on which volunteer is filling the packet vacancies (we all have boxes of seeds under our beds or stowed in our homes/garages).

We look forward to having regionally hardy seeds from area gardeners donated in the coming year. There is a form at the 2nd floor Reference desk that gives information about the seeds and gardener making the donation so that the packets are curated and labeled appropriately.



Successful Gardening on the Northern Prairie &  
 Let's Grow on the Northern Prairie By Eric Bergeson  
 ~Reviewed by Pam Jones

I initially chose to read *Successful Gardening on the Northern Prairie*, by Eric Bergeson, because of its focus on the Northern Prairie of the United States. I had been looking for a book on gardening in Montana, but they tend to focus on the Rocky Mountain Front, where conditions differ from the prairie, or cover all of Montana, like the excellent literature available through the Master Gardener Program. The narrower focus of this book is practical for gardening in Yellowstone County. I appreciated this book and ordered his second, *Let's Grow on the Northern Prairie*, a companion to his first. This review focuses more on his first book (I refer to *Successful Gardening* and *Let's Grow* when describing the two books).

*Successful Gardening* is well-constructed and full of “nuggets” of useful information for those starting out in gardening. The content is also useful for an experienced gardener new to this area.

Bergeson covers wind, dry conditions, extreme weather, the occurrences of frosts, freezes and snowfall and how to manage the impacts. Another topic refers to our pervasive alkaline soil. If one is interested in sustainable gardening and native plants, this book provides a particularly good introduction.

The first chapter is an introduction to The Northern Prairie. The second chapter, Getting through Winter, recognizes the importance of winter to gardening. One learns about the protective benefits of snowfall and about the effects of freezing weather before the initial snowfall. He speaks about the challenges and ways to adapt, including making winters and our alkaline soil work for us. There are plants, such as the lilac, which thrive. In *Let's Grow*, he lists varieties of hydrangeas that can grow very well here and those to avoid, because they favor acidic soil and milder, wetter climates.

After the first two chapters, Bergeson covers diseases and pests common in the area. Then, the flow of the book is trees, hedges and bushes, fruits, roses, annuals, perennials, a long section on vegetables, and finally a section on the prairie lawn. He describes the importance of quality soil, fertilizing ideas, and the need for irrigation. There are no photos or illustrations, but if there were, the book would be far too long. Instead, he incorporates vivid descriptions and the companion book *Let's Grow* has photos - many excellent colorful photos - of landscapes to illustrate key points on what grows successfully.

In *Let's Grow*, he expands on what flourishes, like the lilac. In *Successful Gardening*, he introduces the lilac as a plant that thrives in our climate and alkaline soil. In *Let's Grow*, he introduces different lilacs to plant for diversification, and he has several beautiful photos of these varieties on the northern prairie. Examples are Yankee Doodle Lilac (also known as Common Lilac, which is most prevalent), Canadian Lilac, Korean Lilac & Miss Kim, a dwarf Lilac. Other examples that he expands on include zinnias, cottonwood trees, quaking aspens, spruce, maples, flowering crab, hydrangeas, geraniums, berries, and apples. He speaks very highly of the *Dictamnus* plant, also called Gas Plant. Although it does very well and blooms in our climate, he says it is difficult to find in nurseries.

The Billings Library has a copy of *Successful Gardening on the Northern Prairie*. Eric's books are available for purchase on [ericbergeson.com](http://ericbergeson.com). [www.ericbergeson.com](http://www.ericbergeson.com) or [eric@ericbergeson.com](mailto:eric@ericbergeson.com)

Eric Bergeson was a well-regarded horticulturist and popular owner of the family nursery, Bergeson Nursery, in Fertile, Minnesota. Fertile is a small town (population <1,000) and the nearest city is Grand Forks, North Dakota. He traveled widely in his home state and in neighboring states including Montana, often as a speaker. Talented and charismatic, he hosted a cable show called *Little Garden on the Prairie*. He authored books on topics other than gardening, too. Unfortunately, he suffered from chronic depression and took his own life in April 2022. His brother Joe had purchased the nursery before Eric's death and continues to operate it along the same lines that Eric did. His sister, Tracie, oversees his website and sale of his books.



## Managing Volunteers: The Art of the Unknown

~by Bess Lovec

Let's assume you find yourself in a position of leadership, likely by default as no one else jumps forward, to volunteer at a local nonprofit organization. After the initial leap, you realize that doing so will be more fun and achieve more goals, plus give other Master Gardeners a chance to earn hours, if you rally other gardeners. The thought that they might like the organization and/or you could cross your mind.



Clear work time with staff of the facility to make sure it's a convenient time. You don't want to be pawing in the dirt during a wedding, after all! Saturday mornings or afternoons of course is best for working folks or those with children. I have had luck with retired people on Friday mornings (the only weekday I'm available). Next you send a carefully worded post to Master Gardeners, including time, date, address, your phone number & email, and estimated scope of the project. Then wait. Respond within 24 hours to any nibble, explaining parking situation. Create a group email list.

About three days before workday, send a reminder, including what you want them to bring, such as a water bottle (always), work gloves, sun hat, tools, etc. Don't waste emotional head space with no-shows. Always keep in mind that they are volunteers. I never hold grudges for those who don't materialize because individuals have health issues or might be caring for someone disabled or have a spontaneous social opportunity, nor do I expect any explanation. If they choose to share what happened, and most do, fine, but really it's none of my business. Instead, just be thrilled when people do come to work, and let them know! Leadership involves cheerleading and appreciating others' contributions.

Usually the project at hand is obvious, but some volunteers choose to do a chore that might not be planned, like weeding or pruning. As long as they're not severely altering the plan, my philosophy is to let them run with what they see to do. Which do you prefer: They weed or not come at all? One perpetual concern of mine is safety, especially when it's hot or hazardous tools are lying around to trip the unwary. Frankly, I might not get much done because I always check in with individuals and offer treats after an hour, plus monitor what's happening. Some participants might weed plants that are not weeds, or plant new shrubs in undesignated locations. Proceed with caution.

Realize that each person has his/her/their own idea of what the space should look like. Here it can get tricky, and having a design in place or a landscape architect involved usually transcends possible intentions. I always listen and try to paraphrase any suggestions because the ideas might have merit, but, more importantly, people deserve to be heard. Last summer I had a brief window of opportunity to accept a donation from a greenhouse of about \$150 worth of annuals. I grabbed a gob smack of colorful marigolds, impatiens, dusty miller, petunias, and alyssum before the offer evaporated. A board member of the nonprofit expressed displeasure at the robust color explosion, preferring a neutral palette, but when I explained that the bedding plants were free, she reconsidered her position.

When caught in crossfires, which seldom happens, defer to employees, especially the director. After all, they know what face they want the organization to present. Then you as a volunteer are absolved of decision-making. Consider writing a thank you email within 24 hours to everyone who helped, and include those who could not attend so they know what transpired. Incidentally, I'm new at managing volunteers, so feel free to email me about your ideas on this topic. Let's have an ongoing conversation!

Finally, ask the director if your volunteers can receive free passes or whatever amenities might benefit your volunteers. The director of one facility where I lead volunteers gave them free memberships. She certainly knows how to keep us, me included, coming back!

The editors chose an armchair theme for this issue and the weather is certainly making it a wise choice. Fire up your digital device and surf along with us as we explore Internet resources for gardeners of all stripes:

## Plant Identification Apps

~ Suri Lunde

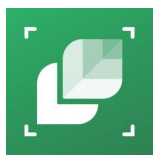
Plant identification mobile apps are handy tools for gardeners and plant lovers needing to determine the species of a plant, weed, tree, or wildflower quickly. Most of us carry our cell phone everywhere and these phone apps allow you to snap a photo of the plant, upload it to the app, and voila! information about the plant (or possible matches) is revealed.

The best apps are easy to use, provide highly accurate identification, and give detailed information, plant care guides and links about the plant. Most apps are free, while others have free trial versions, limit the number of free snaps you can use, are powered by advertisements, or need a paid subscription in order to unlock additional features. Even though the technology is good, and improving, apps do occasionally misidentify plants. To improve the probability of identifying a plant correctly, always take multiple photos of the plant from several angles and shots of various parts of the plant (leaves, flowers, bark, etc.). Depending on their database and AI algorithm, some apps do a better job at recognizing house plants while others are more favorable for wild plants. You have to decide which app works best for you.

Here are some options for iOS and Android available on Apple App Store or Google Play Store.



Plantsnap

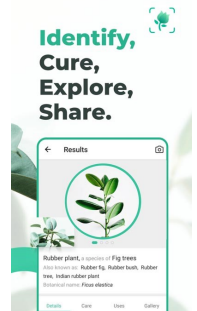


Leafsnap



iPlant

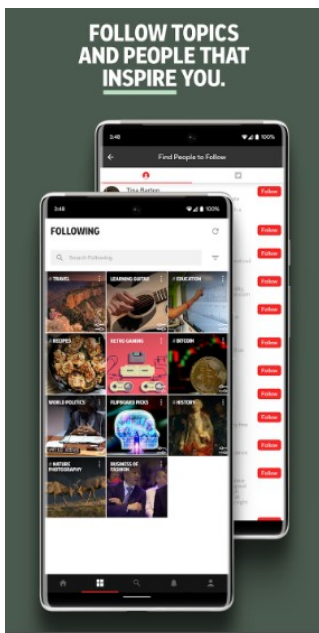
Also: PI@ntNet and Google Lens



PictureThis

## Willing to view a potpourri of gardening articles?

~Submitted by Elizabeth Waddington



An aggregate or newsfeed can collect articles of interest to you, then fine tunes the results based on which items you click open. One that I enjoy is Flip Board, available online or as an App on Mac or Android (PC) devices). You can choose what “magazines” to subscribe to and each time you access the site you find additional articles on that topic. Gardening sources range from scientific journals, to international publications to sometimes questionable content...user beware. But, what you get is a delightful assortment of gardening tips, flower shows, flower arranging designs, heritage historical gardens, horticultural studies, and more. Content changes frequently so if there is an article you'd like to reference later you can “flip” it to your own curated collection of “magazines” in much the same manner as saving to a Board in Pinterest. You can also directly send the articles by messenger or email or share them on Facebook.

## The Delights of Atlas Obscura

~ Submitted by Ann Guthals

Recently I watched a livestream of an entomologist displaying and discussing the favorites from his extensive insect collection. Among these were large staghorn, goliath and Hercules beetles; hissing cockroaches; a giant African millipede; and a curly hair tarantula. I learned interesting facts such as the “hair” on the tarantula is made of chitin not keratin (like human hair) and the spider spins silk as it walks around.

Part of gardening for me is understanding the ecosystem of the garden including the insects and other animals that inhabit and participate in our garden ecology. I was glad to see the presentation from this standpoint and also glad our millipedes are ¾” long not 8” long!

Most of what is available from Atlas Obscura is not connected to gardening, but it is such a fascinating resource, our newsletter committee thought we should make our readers aware of it.

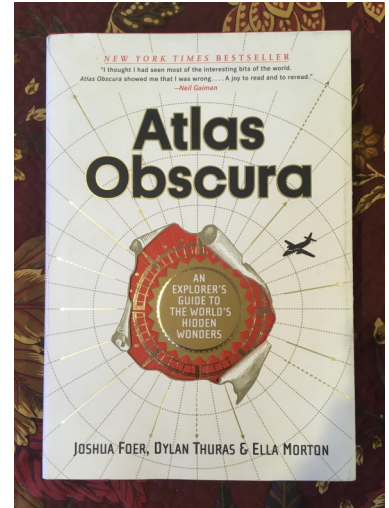
You can learn all about what is available by going to [atlasobscura.com](http://atlasobscura.com) which is described as an “American-based online magazine and travel company founded in 2009.” You can sign up on the site for a free daily newsletter full of unusual and fascinating stories from around the world.

Also offered by this company are small-group tours to unusual sites in places like Nova Scotia, Iceland, Italy, the Galapagos, and the U.S. There are also tour guides for cities and other locations.

There are many educational opportunities including online courses, streaming events like the “bug” class and an upcoming course called “How to Read A Landscape: Botany & Ecology with Annie Novak,” themed crossword puzzles, and books. Currently the books include Atlas Obscura, Atlas Obscura: The World’s Most Adventurous Kid, and Gastro Obscura.

Memberships are available with certain benefits such as discounts on courses but you do not need to be a member to receive the newsletter or participate in events.

If you enjoy learning unusual and little-known facts, you might want to give Atlas Obscura a try!



### Online websites

~Submitted by Sheri Kisch

<https://www.floretflowers.com/tag/erin-benzakein/>

I have signed up for Erin Benzakein’s emails. They alert me when she is putting on a class and about what. You can always unsubscribe. Through the years she has evolved from growing and selling cut flowers for herself and then for the public. (Less international flights from afar). Her classes are no nonsense and full of information like pumpkin, dahlia, and tulip varieties. You can order seeds also.

<http://www.ycmgmt.com/>

This should be listed in our list of important sites. What people possibly don’t know is that if you have a friend or relative that would like to read our top-class newsletters, they can do it online, any time plus there is a great deal of other information available.



<https://www.themarthablog.com/>

I have this site bookmarked for a quick look. Martha Stewart doesn't always show gardening, but I enjoy seeing how other people do things, botanical gardens visited, plants that they propagate and how, and every thing planted or talked about she gives the common name and scientific name in case you want pick to up some for yourself. She was the one who put me onto "M-Roots" a mycorrhiza amendment for my dead dirt.



### Facebook and Instagram: Gardening on Social Media

~Submitted by Suri Lunde



A lot can be gained by being a part of an online community of fellow gardeners on social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, reddit, TikTok, etc. Whether you want some moral support or inspirations for a new gardening project, sharing of ideas, tips and tricks, or needing some crowd-source advice on plants, so much content are being posted daily that you must search and sieve for what might interest you. Here are a few accounts and groups you may want to follow, and then look at other pages/posts while exploring them (warning: exploring on social media can become a time-suck down-the-rabbit-hole activity). Most of these accounts also have their own websites and blogs; and most Facebook accounts have corresponding Instagram accounts because they are under the Meta Platforms.

**Billings Area Backyards:** Local private group account featuring forums, photos, questions and answers pertaining to gardening in Billings.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/344379172715740>

**My Backyard Gardener:** Source of inspiration, humor and general advice on gardening.

<https://www.facebook.com/mybackyardgardener/>

**Gardening Ideas Daily:** Good source of tips, tricks and tutorials for growing and designing a garden.

<https://www.facebook.com/GardeningIdeasDaily/>

**Proven Winners:** Year-long gardening advice, information on new plant varieties, videos and DIY ideas.

<https://www.facebook.com/ProvenWinners>

<https://www.instagram.com/provenwinners/?hl=en>

**Growing Organic:** Focuses on vegetable gardening and carries crowd-source forums plus information sharing from all over the world.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/growingorganic/>



**Baker Creek Heirloom Seed Company:** A distributor of rare seeds in the US, the account has gardening inspiration and tips relating to plants, seeds, flowers, fruits, and vegetables and many beautiful pictures.

<https://www.facebook.com/rareseeds>

<https://www.instagram.com/bakercreekseeds/?hl=en>

**Garden Answer:** Laura LeBoutillier, an internet sensation in the gardening world, has many garden advice videos, inspirations and DIY projects on her page.

<https://www.facebook.com/gardenanswer>

<https://www.instagram.com/gardenanswer/?hl=en>



**Garden Podcasts**

~Submitted by Suri Lunde

Listening to podcasts is a great way to learn more about gardening, tips and tricks of master gardeners, and connect with other plant addicts. Additionally, podcasts let you choose when and what episode you want to listen, and you can do it while multitasking chores. Here is a starter list of popular garden podcasts, which you can download from Apple, Spotify, iHeart, or wherever you get your podcasts.

**Let's Argue About Plants**

From the editors of Fine Gardening magazine, this podcast focuses on common gardening problems with lively but genial conversations between the hosts, and useful tips from expert gardener guests.  
<https://www.finegardening.com/series/fine-gardening-podcast-lets-argue-about-plants>

*A Way to Garden*

robinhoodradio

**A Way to Garden**

Hosted by nature book writer, biologist, artist and blogger Margaret Roach, this award-winning podcast is a must-listen for anyone who loves useful ecology and gardening information while being entertained.  
<https://awaytogarden.com/>

**Plantrama**

Garden writers Ellen Zachos and CL Fornari mix humorous, quirky but always informative plant/growing/gardening/food topics and subjects in their podcasts.  
<https://www.plantrama.com/>

**The Organic Gardener Podcast**

Jackie Marie Beyer's podcasts feature various guests from all over the US and overseas, and discuss a wide range of topics relating to Earth-friendly produce and plants.  
<https://organicgardenerpodcast.com/>

**The Beginners Garden**

This podcast from Jill McSheehy helps green thumbs build a successful garden from the ground up by spotlighting successes and addressing failures.  
<https://journeywithjill.net/the-beginners-garden-podcast/>



## LOCAL FOOD MADE EASY

By Ann Guthals

Eating locally saves resources, reduces pollution, and makes our food supply more stable, fresh and reliable. The most local food you can eat is the food you grow in your own garden, but weather and other considerations such as space constraints mean we gardeners need additional local food sources. Much of the food for towns in Montana prior to the second world war was grown by local truck farmers or by individuals. Much has changed since then and the majority of our food now comes from far away, often thousands of miles.

Many places around the world are attempting to re-establish their local food systems. In Montana, Alternative Energy Resources Organization in Helena and many organizations in Bozeman including the Community Food Co-op have championed and supported local food producers for over 30 years. Yellowstone Valley Citizens Council (YVCC) in Billings began a local food campaign in the 1990s and ran a local foods buying club for a few years, worked to connect local producers with local restaurants, and supported the efforts of the Good Earth Market to create a regular reliable market for local food. Billings also has at least two Farmer's Markets during the growing season, as well as several community gardens.

To help fill the market gap left when the Good Earth Market went out of business, YVCC began work on the idea of a local food brokerage. In 2018, the Yellowstone Valley Food Hub (YVFH) was incorporated as an online ordering platform, an agricultural cooperative which began with ten producers. Now there are fourteen member producers with food sourced from 35 to 40 producers across the state. The YVFH gets as much food as possible from Billings and the surrounding area, only looking to producers outside this area for products not grown or made here, such as Flathead cherries. Producers can sell smaller amounts to more people, providing a stable local base for sales, and can develop meaningful, supportive connections with other local producers.

YVFH started in a building downtown but as of 2021 has a warehouse facility on the west end at 2115 Lampman Drive with a small storefront open each Friday afternoon. Staff includes a general manager and a part-time warehouse/delivery person, and several people serve as volunteers. Products include meats, in-season produce, and value-added products such as jams, honey, bread, sausages, dairy products, and pies. Anyone is welcome to join online at [yvfoodhub.com](http://yvfoodhub.com)—there is no joining fee or minimum order. Orders are placed online at the website. There are several food pickup locations in Billings and surrounding areas where drops are made each Thursday or delivery is available for a modest fee.

The pandemic and climate disasters made people more aware of how precarious a food supply line that crosses the world can be. The sales of the YVFH increased dramatically when the pandemic hit. The customer email list is over 3,500 now.

For the future, the YVFH hopes to increase sales, add more storefront hours and drop locations, bring in more member producers, and grow the customer base. Billings is fortunate to have another cog in the local foods wheel as the Yellowstone Valley Food Hub strives to realize its mission of Local Food Made Easy.



The mission of the Yellowstone County Master Gardener Newsletter is to “educate and inform”, not to advocate or persuade. The Newsletter Editorial Board takes no position endorsing or opposing, approving or disapproving, any of the assertions or arguments in the contributed information. Information submitted to the Newsletter is for your interest only.



Separate from the Master Gardener program, the Association is our programs 501(c)(3), organized to raise funding for our program's outreach, and to act as an advisory committee, assisting the Horticulture Extension Agent with the challenges that come with running one of the largest Master Gardener programs in the state.

Full minutes of the Association are available online at: <http://www.ycmgamt.com/minutes.php>

A couple of items of interest from the November meeting:

#### **New Master Gardener Class Format**

Heidi stated the Master Gardener 1 class will now be taught with a hybrid format. Classes will be viewed on-line one week, the next week the students will meet in person for labs, etc. Heidi will be the instructor for the labs. Master Gardener 2 Classes will be online only this year.

**Celebration** Bozeman is doing one for 2023. Yellowstone County is on the schedule for the following year. Sherry Doty and Mike Walz reminded the Board to think about overall costs ahead of time.

## **Insect Update! Brown Marmorated Stinkbug**

~ Submitted by Ann McKean

Discovered in the eastern US in the late 1990's, this Asian invader is spreading across the country. A true insect with sucking mouthparts, the Brown Marmorated Stinkbug is causing serious damage to orchards and vegetable crops. Because of its predilection for overwintering inside people's homes, it is also a smelly and disgusting nuisance for homeowners. Scientists are searching for the best way to control the pest and are exploring the introduction of one of its enemies, a tiny parasitic wasp.



In the meantime, they are still collecting data on its spread, and led by Laurie Kerzicnik, MSU monitored in Montana this past summer. The three collecting sites in Billings were all hit by the targeted stinkbugs. In addition to this empirical collection data, there have also been anecdotal reports of in-home sightings. If you think you have found a Brown Marmorated Stinkbug this winter or next summer, please take a clear photo and email it to Laurie at [insects@montana.edu](mailto:insects@montana.edu). If you can collect the specimen, (it's really stinky but it won't cause harm if you get skunked) wrap it in tissue, stuff it in a pill bottle, and drop it in the freezer, with date and location recorded, until you've heard from Laurie about whether she would like you to send it to her for a positive ID.

Thank you to all eleven Master Gardeners who participated in the statewide study.



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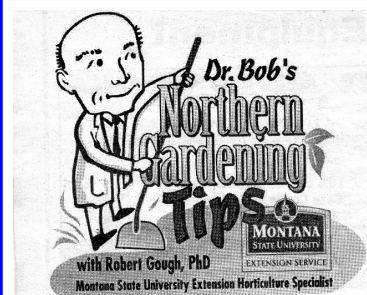


The office remains open 8 am - 5 pm and we will continue to service our community via phone calls, emails, and other appropriate means.

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### Question to Dr. Bob:

### Are there any storm proof trees for Montana?

Answer: Winter storms can really wreak havoc with our shade trees and I guess that's part of the price we pay for living in the North. But some trees are more susceptible to damage than others and choosing the right tree can save you money on pruning and removal bills.

The following comments came from Illinois where someone catalogued the degree of winter damage to many of their common street and landscape trees. I'm sure the same information will apply to our area.

Generally, trees with a conical form and low branch surface area sustain the least damage from ice and heavy snow. Siberian elm, American elm, honey locust, silver maple, and green ash are all highly susceptible to winter damage from snow loads and ice. White ash, red maple, bur oak, and sugar maple are considered to be moderately susceptible to damage, usually suffering less than the trees in the first group.

The best bets for the least amount of winter damage are the hemlock, arborvitae, Norway maple, catalpa, little leaf linden, and black walnut. Now, some of these trees may not be suitable for planting in your area because of other factors, but this general rating for mechanical winter damage is useful enough and adds just one more piece of information to help you find the best tree for your site.



Northern Catalpa tree

Dr. Bob's wisdom lives on.

~ Submitted by Corry Mordeaux

### Announcements

**Be sure to read the emails from Heidi Schueler to stay up-to-date on Master Gardener events and to learn about volunteer or paid opportunities.**

**Best wishes  
for a safe and healthy New Year from your newsletter staff.**



## **Yellowstone Master Gardener**

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## **Important links:**

Yellowstone Master Gardener Association Page – <http://www.ycmgamt.com>

YMGA Facebook page – <https://www.facebook.com/ycmga>

YMGA newsletters Blog online: [www.yellowstonemastergardenernewsletter.wordpress.com](http://www.yellowstonemastergardenernewsletter.wordpress.com)

YMGA Newsletter Submissions [ymastergardener@gmail.com](mailto:ymastergardener@gmail.com)

Master Gardener links and resources: <https://mtmastergardener.org/linksandresources/index.html>

Ask An Expert <https://www.msueextension.org/>

Schutter Diagnostic Lab—<https://diagnostics.montana.edu/> (plant diseases, insect damage, and environmental plant problem; how to send samples)

Montana Frost/Freeze/Precipitation Data by County – <https://mtmastergardener.org/linksandresources/frostfreezedata.html>

Yard and Garden MontGuides—<https://store.msueextension.org/Departments/MontGuides-by-Category/AG/Yard-and-Garden.aspx>

Montana State Master Gardener Facebook page- <http://www.facebook.com/MTMastergardener>

