

Yellowstone Master
Gardeners
P.O. Box 35021
Billings, MT 59107

YELLOWSTONE MASTER GARDENER NEWSLETTER



We want to hear from you -Send your submissions for newsletter to ynergarden@gmail.com by September 15th for the next issue..

Newsletter

Volume 12 Issue 3

Jul., Aug., Sept. 2023

Editors:

- ◆ Sheri Kisch
- ◆ Ann Guthals
- ◆ Ann McKean
- ◆ Suri Lunde
- ◆ Sheri Fredericksen
- ◆ Bess Lovec

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MIGHT YOU BE ABLE TO HELP?

Our very best, talented, and hard-working team on the newsletter committee has been hit with “life” in many ways. Three of the team are having to step back for one reason or another and are not taking it lightly. Life does throw us all some very serious curves that we have to overcome and stepping back is just a way to correct our equilibrium.

We do need members to step forward as soon as possible. Qualifications were listed in a previous email, but I will list them again.

1. Formatting and layout of the newsletter which would include inserting text boxes and images, resizing images, text wrap (around images), changing font sizes in case you need to better fit a page, text flow if an article needs to spill to another page or area, and basic text editing (find and replace, spell check, and grammar check).

Putting it into a PDF, emailing it to members of the committee for final editing and when complete emailing it to the printer. Two people would be preferable to alternate issues.

2. Interviewing master gardeners, writing up the interview in Word, getting a picture of the person and sending the information to our Gmail account and the publisher.

3. Writing and researching articles on various gardening information including links if necessary, typing it into Word and sending it to Gmail and the publisher.

4. Attending MG events getting pictures and information about the event. Write and send.

The newsletter is published quarterly - January 1st, April 1st, July 1st, and October 1st. We try to have a meeting a month before publishing either in person or Zoom, to decide who will be publishing, interview, recipe, book report, insects (good, bad and the ugly), articles of interest, a plant, and other news. We ask that articles arrive by the 10th – 15th of the month before publishing to allow time for the publisher to format all the information.

If you could commit and feel comfortable with any of the above duties, please contact me at once.

Contact: Sheri Kisch (406) 601-1300 nick.sheri.kisch@gmail.com

~By Sheri Fredericksen

Laura Zimmerman grew up on a farm and ranch near Circle, Montana. Her parents raised wheat, barley, oats, and hay in addition to a vegetable garden and flower beds. She remembers the drive with her parents to Terry during summer to purchase vegetables from a truck farm called Denby's Garden. Some vegetables would be enjoyed fresh, and some would be preserved for the winter.

Laura attended a rural one-room schoolhouse from first through sixth grade, then completed junior high and high school in Circle. She earned a BS in Education/Special Education from Eastern Montana College (now MSU-B) in 1978. While in college Laura met and married her husband, Ric Zimmerman. She taught at Independent School, a rural school in Yellowstone County, for 35 years, and co-owned Zimmerman's Portrait Design with her husband. She made sure that the business had colorful flowers to greet the customers in the summer and was chief gardener at home having the summers off.



After her retirement from teaching, she worked as an education director at Head Start and later at Young Families Early Head Start for the past nine years. Laura was inspired to take the Level I Master Gardener (MG) class when a colleague at Head Start (a Level I MG) was thinking about resurrecting the garden boxes in the school yard. Laura enrolled in the Level I MG class and partnered with her colleague on the garden project. It was an enriching experience for the children to plant seeds, watch them grow, and harvest the herbs and vegetables, some of which were used by the kitchen staff in their menus for the children. Their favorite was the homemade salsa. At Young Families Early Head Start, Laura started garden boxes for the "littles". They love eating the cherry tomatoes.

Laura has garden boxes and flower beds in her yard and calls working in them her "dirt therapy". She loves growing flowers, herbs, tomatoes, cucumbers, carrots, beets, and strawberries. Every spring she plants something new, just for fun. This year she is growing two kinds of heirloom tomatoes: Brandywine Pink Heirlooms and a Siberian Heirloom from Canada that is supposed to endure quite a bit of cold weather. Living in Alkali Creek, her pest problems include deer, rabbits, and wild turkeys. She is trying to introduce plants in the front yard that they will not eat or destroy. The alkaline water and sandy soil can also be challenging.

Her favorite flowers are Siberian Irises, Bearded Irises and Old Fashioned Daylilies which remind Laura of her mother as she gave them to her when they were divided. Laura's husband, who is a professional photographer, often takes pictures of the flowers in their yard. He sells some of his photographs; and, at her last mammogram, she was surrounded by her own flowers on the walls all around the room!



After retiring this July, Laura intends to continue "growing" her knowledge of plants by experimenting, attending workshops, reading, and completing Levels 2 and 3 of the MG program. She knows that if plants get what they need for sun, water, and nutrients they are happy and will thrive. That is the fun and the challenge.

~By Ann Guthals

When I started growing food indoors in my hydroponic Aerogardens, I was excited to think I could grow spinach. I found out that at that time it did not seem possible to get spinach seeds to germinate for use in an Aerogarden.

Recently I stumbled across a YouTube video that shows you how to get spinach to germinate and grow in a hydroponic indoor garden. I tried the method and it worked! I was finally able to grow spinach in my indoor gardens. Here is a summary of the method:

Soak spinach seeds for 1 to 2 days in water. Remove any seeds that float. Place the soaked seeds in a damp paper towel and place this in a Ziploc baggie, leaving the opening at least partially open. In about 3 days, you should see some seeds sprouting. Place sprouted seeds gently in the Aerogarden coir plug and basket, label, and place in the Aerogarden deck. If the seedling is big, split the coir plug slightly to accommodate the seedling.



The process took about 30 days from seed to harvest. I got beautiful leaves which I harvested, but spinach does not seem to re-grow its leaves like lettuce does when you harvest the outer leaves. While I was gratified to finally be able to grow spinach indoors, I think I will only do this occasionally as the process is long and the output not large. It was quite fun to experiment and have success, though!

Here is the link to the video that finally solved the problem:

<https://youtu.be/3S3jsLzpcuw>



PLEASE HELP US TO COMPLETE A NEW MG CONTACT LIST

EMAIL HEIDI (Schueler, Heidi <heidi.schueler@montana.edu> WITH YOUR NAME, ADDRESS, PHONE NUMBER, AND EMAIL ADDRESS. IF YOU DON'T DO EMAIL, THEN SEND OR DROP OFF THE ABOVE INFORMATION TO HER. MANY OF THESE ITEMS HAVE CHANGED IN A YEAR. THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP.

~By Ann Guthals

Many gardeners are fortunate to have their own personal gardens in their yards to tend. For those who wish to garden but do not have access to land because, for example, they live in an apartment, luckily there are several community gardens in Billings.

Community gardens are generally areas owned by various types of groups that offer plots to individuals, usually for an annual fee to cover costs. Often these gardens also have shared common areas as well as garden areas that grow food to donate to food pantries. One important aspect of these gardens is the development of a community interaction amongst the gardeners.



VISTA volunteers (Volunteers in Service to America) have been involved in the development of community gardens in Billings. The VISTAs and representatives from the four community gardens began the Magic City Community Gardens Association. The members meet once a month to pool resources and share information. The association partners with the Billings Community Seed Library, located in the Parmly Billings Library, to offer free gardening classes to its members and the public. The association was instrumental in starting the seed library with the Yellowstone Master Gardeners.

St. Andrew Community Garden

180 24th St.W., Billings

Started over 20 years ago, the St. Andrew Community Garden is located off 24th Street West behind St. Andrew Presbyterian Church. The garden property is owned by the church, but the garden is managed by a committee of gardeners. Participation is open to the public. Originally there were 48 plots—seven years after the garden opened, there were 104 plots. Participants can rent more than one plot. Currently there are around 50 families gardening there. (The garden does not currently have a waiting list).



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On Page 5)

In addition to the half-acre area of individual plots, there is another half-acre garden called the Mission Garden. This is grown and maintained by all the gardeners as a giving garden—last year 4000 pounds of food were donated from this garden to organizations like the Rescue Mission and Family Services.

There is also a small orchard of 12 trees, a greenhouse to grow starts for the Mission Garden, an apiary, a composting area, and a labyrinth, which is open to the public and is next to but not actually part of the garden.

Annual fees are \$15 per 8x8 plot. Fees help cover the costs of maintaining the community garden area, as well as expenses for the Mission Garden.

The primary contact person if you are interested in obtaining a plot or volunteering in the gardens is Dave Kimball. He may be reached by calling the church at 406 656-9256.

Songbird Community Garden 1559 Songbird Drive, Billings

The charter members of Songbird Community Garden started looking for someplace to have a community garden in 2016. They were a nonprofit organization, raising their own funds for the garden. They met with the city of Billings and mutually agreed to develop the land next to Josephine's Crossing that is now the Songbird Community Garden, which began gardening in 2017. The land and fixtures are owned by the city and the garden is open to the public. There are 50 plots ranging in size from 20x20 down to 10x10, and there are 15 3x6 raised beds. The garden provides tools, mulch, compost and water. This year there are 45 members.

Fees are \$60 per season for the 20x20 plots, \$45 for the smaller plots, and \$25 for the raised beds. In addition, a \$20 deposit is required. Plots are available for new members. Members are required to put in at least 6 hours per season helping with upkeep of the garden as a whole and maintenance of the Gifting Garden.



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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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~By Sheri Kisch

Like roses, irises have been a part of our historical and legendary heritage. Because of their delicate texture and sparkling colors, it's easy to see why they were named in honor of the Goddess of the Rainbow. In medieval times the fleur-de-lis became the emblem of France and its form is used in many forms of art, even today.

Irises have always been a popular garden flower. Their size, color, and value have been greatly improved over time, especially in the tall-bearded group. Many of the different species in American gardens are the same as they appear in nature and your grandmother's garden.



Bearded irises are identified by thick, bushy, and different colored "beards" on each of the falls (lower petals) of the blossoms and thick, fleshy rhizomes. The shortest grow up to 8 inches high and are the earliest blooming. Mid-range blooming irises heights run 16 to 27.5 inches and some have ruffled petals and thinner leaves. The most popular are the tall bearded irises growing up to 27.5 inches and are later blooming.

There are newer varieties of bearded irises that can rebloom. Additional fertilizer and water need to be applied to encourage blooms that appear in the summer and fall. One thing to understand about reblooming irises is that nothing is guaranteed. Reblooming may or may not occur.

Irises need plenty of sunshine and moisture but not soggy soil. Adding coarse sand, humus, bone meal and a good garden fertilizer with low nitrogen at planting time will keep them producing. In light sandy soil the rhizomes may be covered an inch or so. In heavy soils they should be left with their tops exposed. If you have several tall beards to plant, space them at least a foot and a half apart, facing the rhizomes in the same direction giving them room to multiply.

When blooming is finished, bend the stalk backward from the base and then snap forward and downward with a quick jerk. If it doesn't come free you may have to cut it off. Any brown leaves should be removed as they appear. Watch for rot and quickly take care of it as it can spread. Sterilize the soil first or replant elsewhere.

To restore iris beds, every three to four years cut the leaves off by half, lift the clump of rhizomes and divide with a sharp clean knife, cutting the newer parts of the rhizome free from the old. Discard the old part for it won't bloom again. Discard or burn any rhizomes that are diseased. You do not have to cut back the leaves in the fall every year, other than if replanting. Have your new beds prepared with amendments as above for replanting. Keep the rhizomes out of the sun and replant immediately. If feeder roots are dried no new growth results until new ones begin.



For more information -
<https://extension.illinois.edu/blogs/good-growing/2021-08-20-how-divide-and-plant-bearded-iris>
<https://www.irises.org/gardeners/care-classification/care/>

There is one 50x50 plot that is designated as the “Gifting Garden.” Members tend this plot. Once a week during harvest season food from this Gifting Garden as well as excess produce from member gardens is donated to a food pantry.

Contact person for Songbird is Cynthia Jesse at 406-208-6422.



Amend Park Community Garden

Northeast Corner of Amend Park near So. Billings Blvd.

In 2014 VISTA volunteers and staff from Billings Parks and Recreation Department founded the Amend Park Community Garden to help address food access and food insecurity issues in this area of Billings. The park is owned and maintained by the City of Billings and is open to the public. There are 44 individual plots, 8 communal plots, and 17 communal fruit trees. Annual fees are as follows: \$15 for 3x6 raised beds, \$20 for 10x10 plots, \$30 for 10x20 plots, and \$40 for 20x20 plots. New members may apply after March 1st each year; the garden opens in April. Members do their own watering. Additionally, there is a requirement to provide at least 16 hours per season of volunteer help to care for the communal plots. Food from the communal plots and trees may be used by members—excess is donated.

Contact person is Danny Choriki who can be emailed at danny.choriki@gmail.com or interested gardeners may call Billings Parks and Recreation at 406-657-8371.

From Danny Choriki:

Some people prefer gardening as a community activity. There are people around to ask for advice. Or a tool you don't have. Or a tomato seed that has evolved to this specific climate. Someone to water if you are out of town. People to share your zucchini with. A natural group for a potluck. Sharing recipes and canned or frozen goods.

For some like me, it isn't the gardening. It's the community.



Garden of Hope

400 block of S. 27th Street

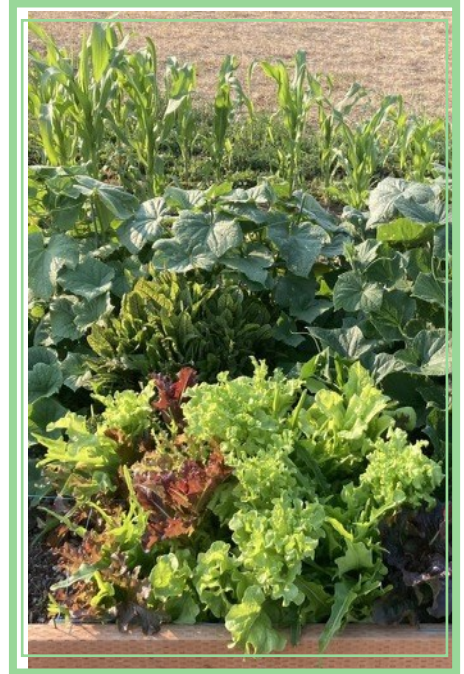
Smallest of the four Billings community gardens, Garden of Hope is a project of the Hope Center Church. There are two 4x16 beds, two 4x8 beds, two 4x4 beds, and a 4x4 corn patch. Plots are not rented to individuals—it is considered an “open” garden, tended by many and open for people to come harvest.

In 2019 a few members of the Hope Center Church began talking about helping people be more food secure—teaching people to garden, not just giving food to people. They hoped to promote self-reliance, especially amongst young people. About a dozen volunteers secured donations and got the garden started. Kids have been involved since the beginning.

The onset of the pandemic caused people to stay home, so it was harder to get volunteers. The garden kept going and now volunteers are back in force.

The church owns the land and provides the water. Seeds have been donated, some from the seed library. Sometimes there are extra starts—these are given away to neighbors. This year neighborhood Girl Scouts will be volunteering.

Saturday is a garden workday from 9 AM to 11 AM. People interested in helping can drop by. The gardeners would like help with developing the soil and learning to compost and the corn patch is a new experiment this year.



Contact person is Deb Ford, who may be reached at 406 647-5840. Deb says the best thing they have grown is the relationships with the people in the neighborhood—she has many stories to tell!

REMINDER
PLEASE KEEP TRACK OF YOUR VOLUNTEER
HOURS TILL THE EXTENSION WEBSITE IS
BACK ONLINE.

Summary of May 17th, 2023 YCMGA Meeting

The meeting was called to order at 5:13 pm by President Paul Scarpari.

Treasurer's Report: Steve reviewed the Finance Report: Bank Balance \$16,930.81. Funds set aside by the Board: Metra Garden Project = \$2,479.91 and Seed Library = \$444.27. Funds available = \$14,006.63.

The treasurer's report was approved.

Steve provided the current list of members of the Association with contact information.

Minutes: The March minutes were read and approved.

Old Business:

1. Sherry will remain as Secretary on the board until 2024 when her term ends.

2. Master gardener list: Paul asked if a MG list could be provided to all members. Heidi said she could not automatically send out a list without approval from each master gardener. Amanda said it could be like a directory they have at schools. Heidi will work on a way to create a list.

3. Master Gardener Website: Heidi said that the website is still down. The MG/Extension will be fixed after the MSU website is completed. There are currently no running MG classes.

New Business: 1. Plant sale: There was discussion on the plant sale held May 13th, 2023. Paul said there were quite a few volunteers. Sales 1st day: \$566.00. 2nd day: \$121. 3rd day: \$337 for a total of \$1,024. Paul requested reimbursement for \$279.22. \$236.84 for the banner and \$42.38 for advertising. A second sale was approved for May 20th. Mike said that customers had requested Jalapeno peppers, more cherry tomatoes, and herbs. Sherry will be the point person to email board with info on left-over plants and donations.

2. Code Enforcement Class: Paul announced there will be a code enforcement class on trees and hedges at the Library on June 7, 3:30 to 4:30 pm.

3. Class Ideas: Paul asked if anyone had more class ideas for this year. He mentioned a worm composting class (vermicomposting), and a greenhouse class. Joyce suggested a class on irises.

4. Emeritus: Heidi asked Tom Kress if he wanted to have his name submitted for Master Gardener Emeritus status. Tom said yes.

5. Spring gathering: Paul requested we think about a spring Master Gardener gathering.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:30 pm. The next meeting is July 19th, 2023, at 5 pm at the Extension Office.

Respectfully submitted by: Sherry Doty, Secretary, YCMGA



Summer Raspberry Rose Simple Syrup ~ By Ann McKean

When your raspberries come ready and you've made enough jam, this raspberry rose simple syrup is an easy, versatile, and delicious way to enjoy their summer flavor every day. Simple syrup can be mixed into your favorite soda or even just plain club soda for a light refreshing drink. It's great in a cocktail or your hot or cold tea. Garnish with a rose geranium or mint leaf. Raspberry rose simple is divine drizzled over ice cream and even more divine frozen into sorbet. You can paint it onto cake and even skip the icing. It can heighten a simple bowl of fruit to an elegant dessert; try it over fresh peaches!

Raspberry rose simple syrup uses four clean ingredients: raspberries (fresh or frozen), sugar, (I like to use organic cane sugar for a more complex flavor) water, and rose geranium leaves. That's it! A typical simple syrup is made with a one-to-one ratio of sugar to water, but for a sweeter, more concentrated syrup, you can use a two to one ratio if you wish.

Ingredients

1 cup raspberries	1 cup water
1 cup granulated sugar	6 rose geranium leaves

Bring the water to a boil, reduce the heat, and add the sugar, stirring to dissolve. Stir in the raspberries, bring almost to a boil (they will bubble over quite suddenly when they hit a boil) and simmer till they are soft. Mash with a potato masher to be sure all the cells are broken, releasing all their flavor. Add the rose geranium leaves, turn off the heat and allow to steep for ten minutes, stirring once or twice. Pour your red gold through a sieve into a clean jar and enjoy the taste of summer from breakfast to dessert!



Let us know how you've used your raspberry simple syrup. Enjoy!

Latin for Gardeners -Over 3000 Names Explained and Explored by Lorraine Harrison

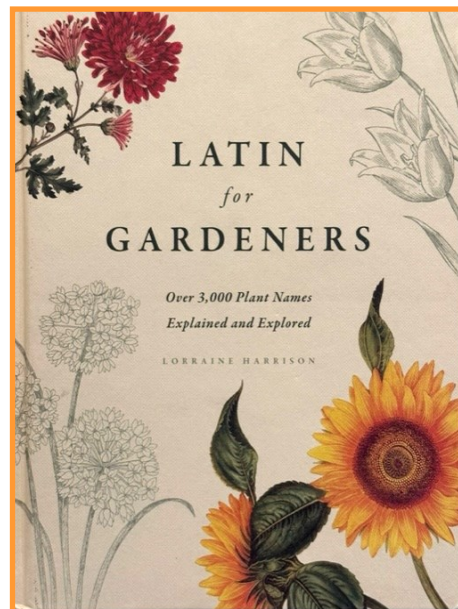
~Reviewed by Ann McKean

Latin for Gardeners is an informative and beautifully illustrated book that demystifies and reveals the histories and meanings of the Latin names of plants. It reviews the history of binomial botanical nomenclature and has wonderful tidbits on the history of plant hunters whose influences are still evident in today's gardens. It not only shows the accepted typical pronunciation of botanical Latin, but it also gives synonyms and gender where applicable, shows plural spellings, and explains the meaning of the name.

Latin for Gardeners is not an alphabetical listing of every plant name known to man. Rather, it explains the purpose and meanings of botanical Latin, thus elucidating the value in understanding and using the Latin names of plants.

If you are curious about how *Helianthus* got its name (helios is Greek for sun and anthos means flower) or how to pronounce *benghalensis* (ben-gal-EN-sis) or *douglasii* (dug-lus-ee-eye), or why a lot of plants have the name rubens, ruber, rubra or rubrum (they have red in them), this is the book for you.

I think Latin is sort of like Shakespeare. The first fifteen minutes are gibberish, and then you become so engrossed, an hour flies by before you know it! I bet you will agree.



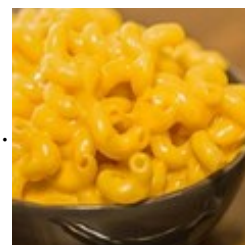
SQUASH MAC AND CHEESE

1 tablespoon olive oil	3 ½ cups vegetable broth
1 tablespoon butter	1 12oz. can evaporated milk
1 cup chopped onion	1 8oz. package triple cheddar cheese blend
1 teaspoon chopped garlic (I used powder)	black pepper
½ teaspoon dried Italian seasoning	thyme if you wish (I did)
1 16oz. package elbow macaroni	2 cups cubed buttercup squash

1. In an Insta Pot or pressure cooker, select sauté; add oil and butter. When hot add onion, garlic, and Italian seasoning; cook for 1 minute until softened. Add macaroni, squash, and broth. Select cancel.
2. Lock lid and set pressure release valve. Select pressure. Cook on high pressure for 3 minutes.
3. When time is up, use natural release for 5 minutes. Vent remaining pressure, unlock lid.
4. Stir in milk and cheese until melted. Serves six.

I needed to use my last buttercup squash (now April) and wanted something different. I have never made mac and cheese, so this sounded perfect. It turned out better than I had expected. The recipe came from a long-held magazine article.

Submitted by Sheri Kisch



~ By Ann McKean

There are millions of different plants in the world, and there are hundreds of languages spoken around the globe. How then can we possibly tell what we are getting when we buy a plant? Is it a Tittle-My Fancy, a Meet Her in the Entry Kiss Her in the Buttery, a Monkey Face, a wild pansy, a Johnny Jump Up or all of the above? The Latin name for all of these is *Viola tricolor*. Snow-on-the-Mountain is a little trickier. That could be *Aegopodium* or *Euphorbia*. If you go to a garden center and ask for Snow-on-the-Mountain, you could be given either of these two very different plants. If you want an Ash tree, do you want a *Sorbus* or a *Fraxinus*? As the buyer for a nursery, I have to know the Latin names of plants to be sure I'm ordering what I think I'm ordering. As someone who also sells those plants, I sometimes have to ask twenty questions to see which Snow-on-the-Mountain someone is actually looking for. As Master Gardeners, we are better teachers and better gardeners if we understand and use the Latin names of plants. As we start to learn some of the names and their meanings, a whole world opens up that informs us about the colors, shapes, growth habits, life cycles, and origins of plants. Once you go down the rabbit hole, you'll be hooked!

Taxonomists decide how to group plants, then use binomial nomenclature to name them. Each unique plant has its own name. Binomial nomenclature gives the generic name (Genus) and the specific name (species). The genus and species names are always shown in italics. It can also include a variety, which is a natural variance of a plant, or a cultivar, which is a man-made variance. The Genus tells you if you are getting a mountain ash (*Sorbus*) or an ash (*Fraxinus*). The species tells you if you are getting a green ash (*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*) or a white ash (*Fraxinus americana*). The cultivar tells you that your white ash is an 'Autumn Purple' (*Fraxinus americana* 'Autumn Purple').

Many species names are descriptive of the plant, so once you learn some of those names, you really start to have fun. A *Centranthus ruber* has red flowers, while a *Vinca alba* has white ones. An *Aronia melanocarpa* has black seeds. A *Picea glauca* 'Pendula' is a weeping white spruce. A *Picea pungens* 'Pendula' is a weeping Colorado spruce. Pungens means sharp (think pungent), so you know what those needles will be like on that tree! An *Echinacea angustifolia* has narrow leaves, as does a *Populus angustifolia*. Something longiflora has long flowers, while something longifolia has long leaves. Are you having fun yet?! How about something macrophylla (large leaves) or macrorrhiza (large roots)? What about microphylla? Get it? Where do you think a plant with the name maritima in it would grow well? Might it be salt tolerant? What about sylvestris? (Think of a sylvan glade.) If it's occidental, it's from the west. Where do you think a plant with the name japonica or virginiana in it originated? Would you think a plant with the name foetida in it would smell good? No! If it's got annua in its name, it's probably an annual, and if it's got perennis in it, it's a perennial. Isn't that easy?! If it's a pumila or compacta or pygmaea, you know it won't get too big. If it's a spicata, you can bet it has a spiked shape, whereas rotundifolia would be round. If the name includes the word officinalis, you will know it has herbal or medicinal uses.

Don't think for one minute that Latin names aren't important and don't think for one minute you can't learn them. And don't worry about how to pronounce them; just dive in and have fun!

The mission of the Yellowstone 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.

Yellowstone Master Gardener

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Important links:

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

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

YMGA Newsletter Submissions 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>