

Garden Update

Week of June 14, 2021

By Kathleen Cue, Horticulture Extension Educator in Dodge County

What Nebraska Extension Master Gardeners Are Up To

Nebraska Extension Master Gardener Volunteers are hard at work.

In Dodge and Washington Counties, Master Gardeners are working on food gardens. Growing Together Nebraska is a joint effort between Master Gardeners and Extension Nutrition Educators. Vegetables and herbs are planted, cared for, harvested, weighed, and donated to local food pantries. Donations are already underway, with the harvest of radishes and basil! A huge variety of vegetables have been planted, with tomatoes, peppers, onions, potatoes, broccoli, cucumbers, squash, zucchini, and pumpkins (to name a few) eventually providing nutritious locally-grown food for the food insecure.

In Dakota County, Master Gardeners are pruning the fruit trees at the South Sioux City Community Orchard. Located on park property, the orchard is a cooperative effort between Nebraska Extension and the South Sioux City Parks Department. Guided by Master Gardeners, locals can volunteer their time to manage weeds, water, and prune trees, earning a portion of the fruit harvest for themselves.

In Burt County, the Tekamah Pollinator Garden is readying for visitors. With the idea of planting gardens primarily to benefit insects, the popularity of pollinator gardens is on the rise. Groups from colleges, schools, and garden clubs tour the garden and take ideas back for their own projects.

In Thurston County, Master Gardeners from the UmoNhoN Nation Public Schools are working with youth in summer programs to learn about vegetable gardening through the Farm to School project.

In Washington County, Master Gardeners grow historic varieties of vegetables at the Fort Atkinson State Historical Park in Fort Calhoun to demonstrate the kinds of vegetables families of soldiers and tradespeople grew. At the monthly living history demonstrations, Master Gardeners are on hand to talk about the first winter at the Fort and how a little-known native plant called ground nuts saved lives from the scourge of scurvy (a nutritional deficit of vitamin C). Vegetables from this garden are donated to the Growing Together Nebraska project.

This is just some of the many projects Master Gardeners throughout the area are involved in. Stay tuned as I share more about their activities.