

# - The Meristem -

Fall  
2019

WHERE WE CULTIVATE GROWTH

NEBRASKA EXTENSION  
MASTER GARDENER NEWSLETTER



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#### Resources for Master Gardeners:

Websites:

[Mastgardener.unl.edu](http://Mastgardener.unl.edu)

[GroBigRed.com](http://GroBigRed.com)

Facebook:

Nebraska Master Gardeners

Send articles for publishing to:

[mspath2@unl.edu](mailto:mspath2@unl.edu)

Next newsletter deadline: February 15

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Region: Burt, Cuming, Dakota, Dixon, Dodge, Saunders, Stanton, Thurston, Washington and Wayne Counties.

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## MG Notes

By Kathleen Cue, Extension Educator

Many thanks go to Nancy Hoppes and her husband Brian for hosting our first-ever Master Gardener potluck picnic. The rain held off long enough so we could enjoy the food and a tour of their garden. Anyone who would like to host the potluck picnic next year, let me know and you can choose the date!

Congratulations to Diane Lee, who has achieved her 40 hours of volunteer time and has earned the title of Master Gardener. Along with this Diane gets her very own personalized Master Gardener name badge! Remember, Interns, once you've achieved 40 hours of volunteer time, let me know so that you, too, can receive your MG name badge.

The weather was perfect for the Tekamah Pollinator Garden open house on Monday, September 23. A lot of community members turned out to find out more about pollinators.

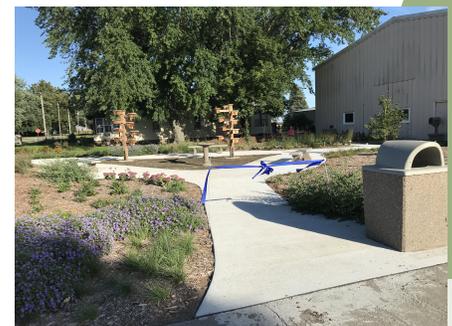
John Wilson, Extension Agriculture Educator, Mike Woods, Editor of Plaindealer Publishing and I welcomed visitors and shared information on what it takes to have healthy pollinators.

Many thanks to the Master Gardeners who responded to the all-call for extra hands earlier this month.

Kathleen



Ron Fechner, Betsy Anderson, Ramona Miller-Heiss, and Kim Neumann provided extra hands when help was needed.



The Tekamah Pollinator Garden in readiness for the ribbon cutting ceremony.

# 2019 International Master Gardener Conference—Valley Forge, PN

By Dee Drew, Washington County Master Gardener

Attending the 2019 International Master Gardener Conference in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania was an experience to be treasured. To borrow a quote from the Longwood Garden experience, this conference was the accumulation of “garden design, horticulture knowledge, education, and the arts interplaying to inspire and enlighten” the attendees. There were 1,100 attendees and we joined together to “Dig into our Roots” and explored the birthplace of freedom in America and experience the rich horticultural history of the area.

Writing this article, it's truly hard to know where to begin as Philadelphia is the Garden Capital of America. There are thirty gardens within 30 miles of Philadelphia. Each garden is unique and spectacular in its own way. One of the largest gardens we toured was Longwood at 1083 acres. It began when Pierre S. du Pont bought a local farm in the early 1950's. Today it provides classes and tours, an extensive pest management and research program, a large meadow garden and tropical and annual plant identification.

Mt. Cuba Center's premier gardens produce some of the most spectacular displays of the native wildflowers in the mid-Atlantic region. This garden was the former home and family estate of Mr. and Mrs. Lammot du Pont Copeland. In the 1960's the couple became acutely aware of the changing land ethic and need for ecological conservation. The Mt. Cuba research team uses the Trial Garden to evaluate native plants and related cultivars for horticultural and ecological value. We spent a day with a Mt. Cuba horticulturist learning about key past lessons and the on-going research trials done today.

Of course, everyone has a favorite and that garden might be Winterthur Garden! This is a natural woodland imagined and built by H.F. du Pont. It is one of the last of the original Wild Garden Concept gardens where perfectly hardy exotic plants are placed under conditions where they will thrive. Natural woodland is composed of four layers: the groundcover, the shrub, the small trees and then the tall trees. Mr. du Pont took this concept, on 60 acres of land surrounded by farm ground, and opened it up to create beautiful views of forests, fields, streams and hills.

One of the highlights of the conference was guest speaker David Gibby, the founder of the Master Gardener program which started in 1972. He took the attendees back to the roots of the Master Gardener program. Since the MG beginnings, thousands of volunteer hours have been logged in service to the public. This includes working with youth groups, educating the public on the home gardening industry, maintaining gardening hot-lines, completing community beautification projects, developing pollinator initiatives, speaking to garden clubs, donating to food banks, and many other projects in support of sustainable horticulture and environmental stewardship. Today there are more than 95,000 Master Gardeners in all 50 states and the program continues to grow rapidly.



Master Gardeners Linda Wardell and Dee Drew at the 2019 International Master Gardener Conference in Valley Forge,

# Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Garlic

By Diane Lee, Washington County Master Gardener

## Kinds of Garlic

There are two main types of garlic – softneck and hardneck. Hardneck cultivars generally do better in colder climates and produce larger cloves that are easier to peel. Hardneck garlic produces flower stalks referred to as scapes (bulbils). In order for the plant's growing energy to be focused on the bulb, it is generally recommended that the scape be removed. In June cut back and discard flower stalks that may appear so the plant's energies can be directed toward root and bulb formation.

Softneck garlic does not form a woody stock or produce scapes. Bulbs of softneck types are usually larger with a higher yield of cloves per bulb. Laurie Hodges, Extension Specialist states, *“Softneck types are generally better adapted to a wide range of climates and can be spring-planted with more success than spring-planted hardneck varieties. However, garlic connoisseurs say that softneck varieties lack the subtle flavor differences found in hardneck cultivars.”*

## Purchasing Garlic Cloves

Purchase stock from a reputable source in order to obtain cultivars that are free of nematodes and disease. Garlic bulbs purchased from the grocery store are often stored at a temperature which causes physiological changes which may result in altered quality and poor yield. Select firm bulbs free of mold with a root plate (where roots attach to bulb) that is not discolored or soft. Planting stock needs to be stored at 50 degrees F with no more than 60 percent humidity. The larger the clove planted, the bigger the bulb you will harvest next summer.



Photo: Garlic Scape  
<https://extension.umd.edu/hgic/topics/garlic>

## Location

Plant cloves in a sunny spot with fertile well drained soil high in organic matter. Add organic matter to soil that is high in sand or clay. Avoid planting garlic cloves where onions have been planted within the last two years as they are prone to the same insect and disease problems.

## Planting

Four to six weeks prior to the first frost in the fall is the optimal time for planting garlic cloves. Dormant cloves must be exposed to temperatures 32 – 50 degrees F for one to two months to induce bulb formation. Fall plantings produce a higher yield than a spring crop. Separate the bulbs into cloves and plant the root plate down 2 to 4 inches deep, 4 inches apart. Plant in rows spaced 12 to 14 inches apart.

## Cultivation

Garlic requires 1 to 2 inches of water per week. Growth is most rapid from March to May so sufficient water during this time period produces the greatest effect. Mulch helps provide protection in the winter and moisture conservation in the summer. Vigorous growth can be facilitated by applying nitrogen in the fall and twice in the spring prior to May 1<sup>st</sup>.

## Harvesting

Bulbs begin to mature mid-July to early August. Leaves will turn yellow with the leaf tips turning brown. When the plant turns brown, lift out of the soil and dry the bulbs in a cool shaded area (75-90 degrees F/low humidity for two to four weeks to cure. Trim the top stems to about 2 inches long. If moisture remains in the

Continued on page 5

# Test Your Knowledge of Perennial Weed Management

By Kathy Meyer, Washington County Master Gardener

Sources: EC1269 *Managing Turf and Landscape* and EC1256 *Extension & Landscape Weed Management*  
both Extension Circulars are available at: <https://marketplace.unl.edu/extension/extpubs>

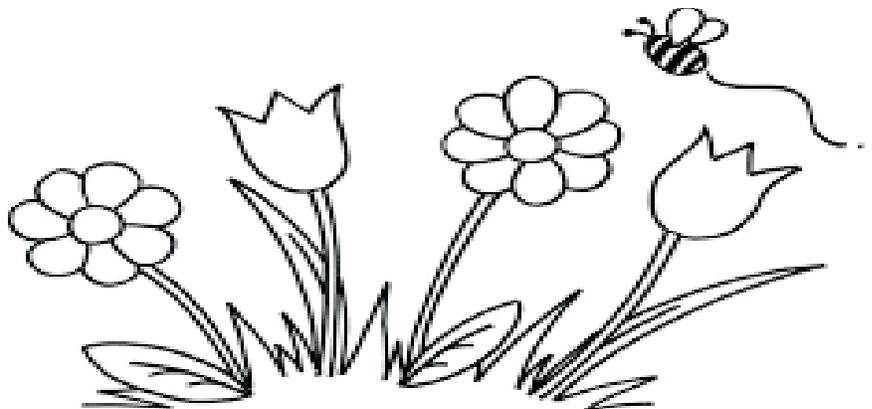
1. T or F: The ideal time to control established perennial broadleaf weeds is late August through October.
2. Identify the perennial weeds:
  - a. Crabgrass
  - b. Wild Violet
  - c. Henbit
  - d. Ground Ivy
  - e. Bindweed
3. Perennial weeds like white clover are best managed:
  - a. in the spring with a pre-emergence herbicide.
  - b. while the plant is under stress.
  - c. with a broad spectrum herbicide.
  - d. with a post-emergence herbicide in the fall.
  - e. by tilling the soil.
4. T or F: Applying herbicides at the correct time, relative to the weed life cycle is critical for best weed management.
5. Integrated pest (weed) management practices include which of the following methods:
  - a. use high quality compost
  - b. using landscaping fabric
  - c. plant yarrow or mint in pots or in an area with a physical barrier
  - d. keep mowing equipment clean between uses
  - e. use selective herbicide to prepare a new landscape bed
6. Post-emergence herbicide recommendations include which of the following:
  - a. check label for specifics regarding treated lawn clippings.
  - b. apply herbicide to healthy, actively growing weeds.
  - c. spray when air temp. is between 60 - 90 degrees F.
  - d. avoid mowing for several days before and after application.
  - e. avoid watering for several days after application.



Field Bindweed  
Photo Credit: Mizzou Weed ID  
weedid.missouri.edu

## Answers

1. True
2. b, d and e
3. d
4. True
5. a, c and d
6. a,b,d and e



# Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Garlic . . . . . Cont. from page 3

By Diane Lee, Washington County Master Gardener

stem, continue to cure a few more days. (Softneck garlic can take longer to cure due to the number of cloves in each bulb.

## Storing

Store bulbs in a mesh bag which allows for good air circulation at 36 - 40 degrees F. Garlic will sprout at 42 - 52 degrees F. Plan to store bulbs in a cool, dry, dark well-ventilated area. Damp basements are not usually an ideal place to store garlic. Shelf life varies depending on the cultivar, type and storage environment but bulbs can last three to five months.

Sources:

<https://lancaster.unl.edu/hort/articles/2002/garlic.shtml>

<https://extension.unl.edu/statewide/douglas-sarpy/pdfs/ce/resources/ce-g2221-garlic-production-in-the-home-garden.pdf>

<http://cru.cahe.wsu.edu/CEPublications/FS162E/FS162E.pdf>

<https://ask.extension.org/questions/141319>



Photo: Planting Garlic In Spring—John Boy Farms

## Composting

By Betty Hamata, Dodge County Master Gardener

First, I must admit that I have thought about composting for a long time but have only done it minimally. My composting now consists of picking up my grass clippings with the lawn mower and piling them up near cedar trees. After a few years they do decompose and I can use them. I also pick up the leaves in the fall with the lawn mower and put them on the vegetable garden after cleaning it. I either till them into the soil in the fall or spring.



Why compost? First it saves money by not having to buy it. It improves the fertility of the soil, saves water by helping the soil hold moisture and reducing runoff. Benefits to the environment are enormous by not filling landfills with yard waist.

What can we compost? Grass clippings, leaves, weeds and garden waste, egg shells, coffee grounds, sawdust and food scraps. Meat bones and fats, dairy products, oils, whole branches or logs, pet waste, charcoal ash, and sawdust from treated wood should NOT be composted. Also any plant that has disease or toxins should be avoided.

There are two kinds of composting, hot composting or cool composting. Hot composting uses an equal mixture of carbon (leaves) nitrogen (grass) and watering each layer as it is added. Turn piles every week if using an enclosed bin or every two to three weeks if using an open top bin, adding water as needed. Food scraps can be buried 8-10 inches into the material. Materials will become inactive if too dry and overly wet materials will not allow enough air circulation. A hot pile can make finished compost in 2-6 months. Cool composting is built a little at a time or all at once but with little turning and moisture isn't added. This method can take 1-2 years. Do not add any diseased or invasive plants or seeds as the temperature will not get high enough to destroy them. Compost is ready to harvest when it is crumbly and sweet smelling. Mix 3-6 inches into garden soil before planting, or add as a mulch around flowers, shrubs and trees.

Old wooden pallets make an inexpensive bin. Pallets can be wired together to form a bin and using a pallet on the bottom will keep materials off the ground for better drainage. Snow fence or woven wire also make good bins. A brick or block bin built on three sides without mortar is a third option for a compost bin.

This has been a challenging year for us as we had flood waters go through our farm last March. Although we did not get water inside the main level of the house, the basement and all of our barns and out buildings had water damage. We were fortunate as we had a lot of volunteers help clean them up. We were not able to plant a vegetable garden but friends shared with us, and most of my perennials survived, so we are thankful.

## Ask the Master Gardener Table

By Nancy Hoppes, Dodge County Master Gardener Intern

The Fremont Farmer's Market in Dodge County is held every Saturday morning from May through October, starting at 7AM. There are three large vendors who have a wide variety of vegetables. Starting in the spring they start offering radishes, leaf crops, etc. followed with delicious summer crops. Now with fall upon us, we see squash, pumpkins, bales of straw and everything one would want for fall eating and decorating. There are also 10 -12 small vendors who offer local honey, baked goods, jams and jellies, soaps and other locally made products.

We have had an Ask the Master Gardener table at the Farmer's Market on a monthly basis this year to answer questions and provide information to vendors and shoppers. There has been a steady stream of shoppers at the Farmer's Market stopping by our booth with inquiries.

Our presence has been well received and we have been asked to come twice a month next year.



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## Master Gardeners at ENREC

By Norma Konecky, Saunders County Master Gardener

Earlier this summer, Richard Anderson, Trade Supervisor of Facility Operations at Eastern Nebraska Research and Extension Center (ENREC) located near Ithaca, contacted Kathleen Cue seeking her assistance to recruit Master Gardeners to help manage the gardens at the Center. Kathleen put out a S.O.S. directed to our Master Gardeners. Three Saunders County Master Gardeners answered the call; Connie Schliffke, Marilyn Jensen, and I. After touring the gardens with Rich and Kathleen, the Master Gardeners agreed to undertake the task. There were four areas that needed work; the area around the sign on Highway 66, the area in the traffic circle at the entrance, the beds on each side of the sidewalk leading to the front door and the courtyard of the building. The first three areas required weeding, dead heading, thinning of wayward plants and general care.

The courtyard will be a long term, multi-year project in order to tame, beautify and bring this area back to life. Progress has been made this year and we look forward to continuing this work in years to come. While this area has been and will continue to be very challenging, the sense of accomplishment the gardeners feel is very rewarding.

### The horticulture helpline:

Anyone with a gardening question is encouraged to call or stop by these counties on their respective day:

- Mondays, 9-noon, Washington County, 402.426.9455;
- Tuesdays, 1-3 pm, Cuming County, 402.372.6006;
- Wednesdays and Fridays, 9 am to noon, Dodge County, 402.727.2775.

MG Ray McTee will be project leader of the Washington County Office, coordinating staffing of the helpline. MG Sue Martin will oversee staffing at Cuming County and I will be project lead for Dodge County.