

A newsletter for  
Master Gardeners in  
Dodge County and  
surrounding areas

UNIVERSITY OF  
**Nebraska**  
Lincoln® EXTENSION



# Growing Up

*Inside this Issue:*

Volunteer and  
Educational  
Opportunities 2

Garden Potpourri 3

2013 GreatPlants 5

Cathedral Flower  
Festival 7

Botanic Garden  
Spotlight 11

Presprouting Seeds 13

More classes 14

UNL Extension In Dodge County  
1206 W. 23rd Street • Fremont, NE • (402) 727-2775

February 2013

## Hello Master Gardeners!

*So, 2013 is here! And what a mild start we've had to the new year so far. I hope everyone is taking this time to plan for the upcoming growing season.*

*Unfortunately, the long-term forecast seems to be telling us we'll be gardening in drought-type conditions for some time. Keep that in mind as you purchase new plants!*

*There are a lot of upcoming activities, classes, programs, etc. that I hope you can take advantage of.*

*Here's to a great growing season!*

*-Natalia*

## Nebraska Master Gardeners Are Now on Facebook

*Keep up with events statewide*

- Go to [www.FaceBook.com](http://www.FaceBook.com) and create a free account.
- Then search for "Nebraska Master Gardeners" and become a "fan."

Each time you log into your account you will receive updates, news and current MG events.

## Master Gardner Trips

There has been interest with organizing trips for Master Gardeners in the past. Last year, we visited TLC Floral in Hooper and Dallas Johnson Greenhouses in Council Bluffs. I would like to schedule more trips like those this year, but would like feedback as to what is preferred, and when. Obviously we can't get everyone's calendar to agree on one date, but if there is a consensus, I would be happy to arrange it! Please contact me with suggestions.



Extension is a division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska—Lincoln cooperating with the Counties and the United States Department of Agriculture

## Volunteer Opportunities, Continuing Education, & Horticulture Events

### Volunteers Needed:

#### Fremont Eco Fair

April 17  
8:00 am-2:00 pm  
Fremont, NE  
402.727.2775

#### Spring Affair Plant Sale

Saturday, April 27  
9:00 am-4:00 pm  
Lancaster Event Center  
Lincoln, NE  
402.472.2971

### Continuing Education:

#### Beginning Beekeeping

March 9, 16  
<http://entomology.unl.edu/beekeepg/workshops2013.pdf>

#### Tree Care Workshops

March 7, 12, 14  
Various Locations  
nfs.unl.edu  
402.444.7875

### Gardening at Lunch Webinar Series

Feb.6—Pruning  
Feb 20—Tree Hazards  
March 6—Veg Gardening  
April 3—Plant Diseases  
May 1—Outdoor Insects  
Registration is required:

<http://marketplace.unl.edu/extension>

Classes are from 12:05 pm-1:00 pm

### Effects of Drought on Landscapes

Feb. 21, 7:00 pm, Dodge County Extension Office  
Fee: Free, Pre-registration is required

### MG Connect Series

Feb. 12—Adapted/Native Plants  
Feb. 19—Drought Recover and water wise Landscape Practices  
Feb. 26—Soils and Soil Mgmt  
Mar. 5—Lawn Disease  
March 12—Container Gardening  
March 19—Bedbugs and other Household Insects

All classes are held at the Dodge CO Extension office and will be from 6:30-9:00 pm

### Upcoming Horticulture Events

#### Lauritzen Gardens Orchid Show

March 2 and 3, 10:00 -4:00 pm  
100 Bancroft St.  
Omaha, NE  
402.346.4002

## Master Gardener Reporting Website

If you don't already use it, the new Master Gardener Reporting website is up and running! From now on, all Nebraska Master Gardener volunteer and educational hours must be recorded online—handwritten documentation will no longer be accepted. Please join us for a how-to-use class:

**March 20th and 25th (only attend one of the two options)  
7:00 pm, Dodge County Extension Office**

If neither class time works, please set up an appointment with me by calling the office.

If you don't have a computer—no problem! We have one for Master Gardener use here!

## Garden Potpourri

by Rich Apking

It probably seems a little strange to be talking about starting seeds in January, as I look out at my garden covered (at least today) with a thin blanket of snow. But since, for the past few weeks, I've been besieged with garden catalogs, the urge to start planning for the coming spring planting season is undeniable. Oh, I just about forgot, the title of this article refers to nature of this article, a little bit of a lot of things.



It's definitely time to start planning the vegetable garden. Taking into consideration, what seeds should be planted as soon as the frost leaves the ground (peas, spinach, lettuce, chard, radishes) you get the idea. If you are cramped for space, just plant a square foot of these seeds, and repeat every couple of weeks, ensuring a steady supply of greens for your table. Make sure you rotate your crops if possible. If you can, don't plant the same thing in the

same spot year after year.

Let's talk about starting seeds inside, for transplants later on. I try to get most of those seeds started six to eight weeks before last frost. About last frost, I'm not sure any more when that happens. The rule for a long time was the middle of May, but with the changing climate, I'm more inclined to think it is the end of April, or maybe a week earlier. The past couple of years, I've set out tomato plants around the first of May and had good results. However, I like to keep a bunch of row cover handy just in case of a late frost. If you can swing it, a soil thermometer is a handy item to have around.



My rule of thumb there is that the soil needs to be 50 to 55 degrees for about a week prior to putting transplants in the ground as well as planting quite a large selection of seeds, like cucumbers and squash.

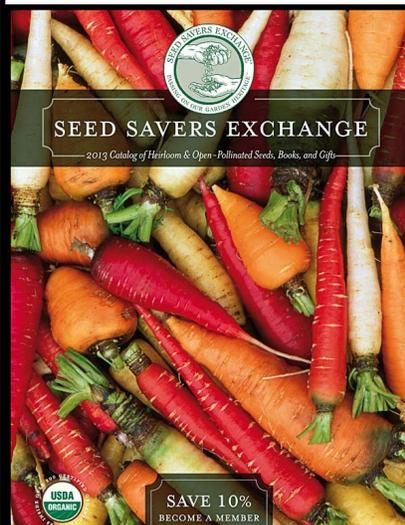
My onion plants will be in the ground about the first of April, they're quite cold hardy. So, I'm starting some seeds the first week or so in February, and will start some more a couple of weeks later, just as insurance.



I grow my transplants in the basement, under some fluorescent lights. It's a little primitive, but so far it has worked. This year I'm starting about seven kinds of tomatoes, four or five kinds of mild peppers and probably the same number of hot peppers. In addition, I'll start some cabbage, some broccoli, some cauliflower, some brussel sprouts, and some okra. That's the plan so far, but I'll probably add to them, I always do. If you don't want to start your own seeds, transplants are available from an ever growing number of sources. Quite a few local stores offer a selection of transplants.

## Garden Potpourri

Even seed catalogs are offering a larger variety of plants than ever before. For instance, Seed Savers Exchange has some of the best tomato and pepper plants I've seen in quite a while.



Totally Tomatoes has offered tomato and pepper plants for a few years, as well as a large selection of seeds. A new comer on the mail order plant scene is Gardens Alive. They're offering grafted tomato plants, grafted pepper plants, and grafted eggplants. The grafted plants are supposed to have greater vigor, increased resistance to disease, greater tolerance of environmental stress, and more abundant yield. I'm going to try some, and will let you

know if those claims are valid.

Quite a few new varieties of plants are available for 2013. 'Jasper' cherry tomato is supposed to be a high yielding plant. It's available from Johnny's Selected Seeds. Burpee is showcasing a new broccoli called 'Sun King' that is supposed to tolerate heat. 'Tenderstar' green beans combine the best of runner and French beans. It has pink and red flowers and produces stringless seven inch pods. It's available from Thompson & Morgan and from Park Seed.



*'Sun King' Broccoli  
from Burpee*

## By Rich Apking



*'Jasper' Cherry Tomato*

Can you remember when seed packets had drawn and painted packets? A company called 'Hudson Valley Seed Library' is creating what they call Art Paks of mainly heirloom seeds.

You can look at their products on line at [seedlibrary.org](http://seedlibrary.org). I wish the best of luck to all of you this upcoming gardening season. Hopefully we'll get enough rain, so all of this stuff actually grows.

Take care, and stay safe,  
Rich

## 2013 GreatPlants

The **GreatPlants** program is a joint effort of the Nebraska Nursery and Landscape Association and the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum that selects and promotes exceptional plants. Each year, a tree, conifer, shrub, perennial, and grass are chosen to be the 'pick of the year.'

The 2013 selections have been made, and here they are. If you have the opportunity, add one or more of these to your home landscape!

### Tree of the Year

#### Northern Pin Oak (*Quercus ellipsoidalis*)

You may (or may not) be familiar with the regular Pin Oak (*Quercus palustris*). Although it's a great looking tree in the right situation, Pin Oaks are notorious for their intolerance of high pH soils, and iron chlorosis can be a serious issue. Fortunately, the Northern Pin Oak is much more suited for eastern Nebraska landscapes and our soils. Northern Pin Oaks will grow 50-60' tall.

It has the attractive foliage a regular pin oak would have, with the deeply lobed leaves, and a strongly pyramidal habit. Acorns are small, only about ½" – ¾" in diameter. Fall color is bronze or red.

### Shrub of the Year

#### American Cranberrybush *Viburnum (Viburnum trilobum 'Red Wing')*

Viburnums are so versatile!! There's one for every landscape situation – sunny, shady, wet, dry, you name it! The Cranberrybush viburnum is no exception. The cultivar chosen for this year's GreatPlants, 'Red Wing' is a great selection that offers truly four seasons of interest. The new leaves in the spring are red, with large, attractive white flowers.

Flowers give way to shiny red fruit in the summer, and fall foliage turns a striking red in color. The fruit hangs on through the winter, providing food for birds, and continued



*Flowers of 'Red Wing'  
Viburnum, just beginning to  
open*

It can grow in full sun to part shade, and can reach sizes of 6-10' tall with about the same spread.

### Perennial of the Year Queen-of-the-Prairie (*Filipendula rubra*)

An under-utilized native wildflower! The flowers are lacy, pink clumps above foliage that looks similar to a maple leaf. The plant itself can grow 3-6 feet high, but needs slightly wet conditions to really grow that large.

This would be a great choice for a spot in your yard that just doesn't seem to drain very well. It can reseed itself and become a stately mass of flowers, but again, would need extra moisture to really do so. This plant will also attract important pollinators, such as bees and butterflies, to your landscape.



*Flowers of Queen-of-the-  
Prairie*

## GreatPlants 2013

### Ornamental Grass of the Year

**Little Bluestem**  
(*Schizachyrium scoparium*  
'Blue Heaven')

Little bluestem grass is a grass native to the tallgrass prairies that at one point covered much of Nebraska. 'Blue Heaven' is a selection from the University of Minnesota for its more upright habit. The foliage is blue-grey, turning a striking burgundy in the fall. The seed heads appear in July-August and have a silvery appearance, making it an even more attractive grass.



*Little Bluestem 'Blue Heaven' in the landscape—note the upright habit!*

Little bluestems are smaller grasses, growing about 2-4.' It needs full sun, and will require little to no water after its first year. They are also very tolerant of different soil types – making it an excellent choice for eastern Nebraska landscapes!

### Conifer of the Year

**Border Pine (*Pinus strobi-*  
*formis*)**

Border Pines are a great alternative to its cousin, the common Eastern White Pine. Border pines still have that soft needle appearance that white pines have, but they are more likely to have a bluish cast to the needles. They can get very large – up to 80 feet under ideal conditions! So make sure you have the space for it before you plant it!



*Summer foliage (above) and acorns (below) of the Northern Pin Oak (Description on previous page)*

*Close-up shot of Border Pine needles*



## Cathedral Flower Festival

by Mary Svboda

Flowers were the stars of this year's 28th annual Cathedral Flower Festival. In years past, floral designers have been given themes or objects to serve as inspiration for their designs. This year the theme was 'Honoring our Floral Designers.' Over forty of the areas' finest designers accepted the challenge to create fabulous floral arrangements showcasing the flowers themselves.

They joined in offering us this wonderful opportunity to enjoy the beauty of flowers and the promise that spring will soon be here. This flower festival honors all the men and women who dedicate themselves to the floral industry, including growers, shippers, pickers, and distributors.

In today's world, we have become accustomed to having almost limitless access to flowers throughout the year. As with many things in life, we sometimes fail to appreciate all those people behind the scenes who bring beauty of flowers into our lives.

The Cathedral arts project presents the annual flower show each year during the last weekend in January at the Cathedral Church. In addition to the fabulous display of flowers, they also present musical performances during the flower show. These include piano, voice and piano, organ, lute, accordion, and the Omaha Suzuki Strings selection, just to name a few. Admission is free, but a free will donation is always welcome.

The flower show is held at Saint Cecilia Cathedral in Omaha, Nebraska. For further information on next year's show, contact them at the information below.

701 N 40th St, Omaha, NE  
68131  
(402) 551-2313  
[www.stceciliacathedral.org/](http://www.stceciliacathedral.org/)

Pictures of this year's show can be found on the following pages.

*To the left is a view of St. Cecilia Cathedral*



*A Flower Basket –Designer (above) and Nash Chapel –Designer (below)*



*Lauritzen Gardens, - Designer*



*Fortino's Flowers—Designer (above) Hy-Vee Floral—Designer, (below)*



## Botanic Garden Spotlight—Longwood Gardens

By Betty Hamata

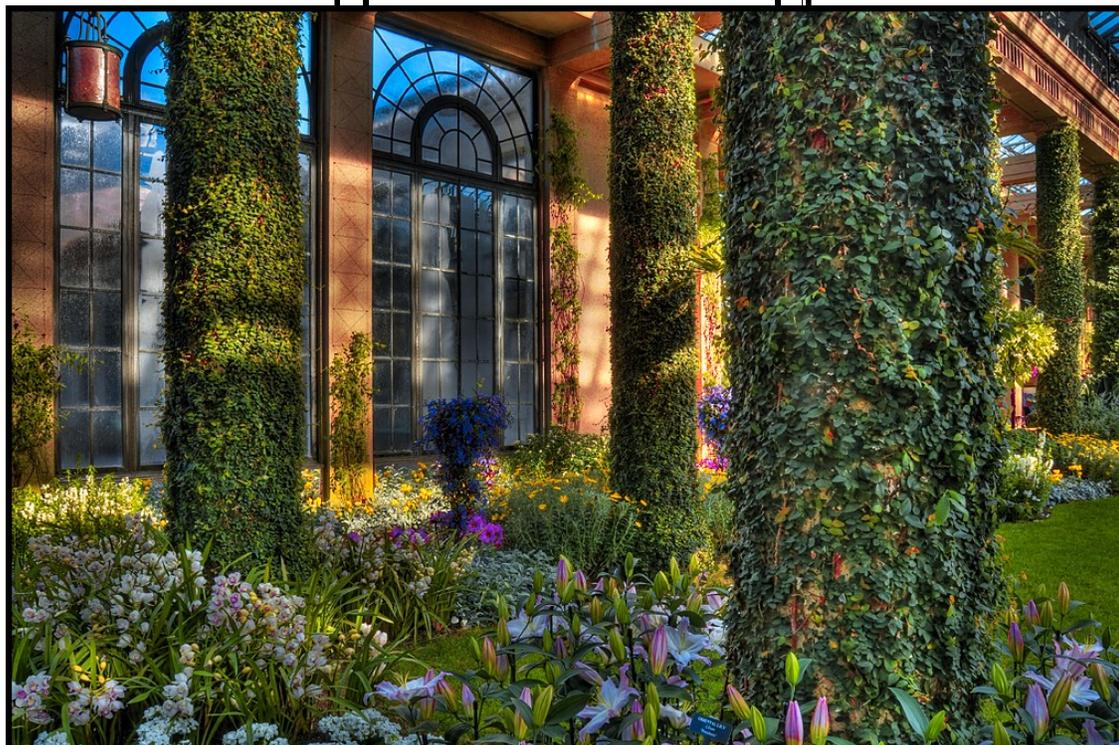
While touring the fall foliage in the New England states of the northeast, I decided a trip to Longwood Gardens (near Philadelphia, PA) was needed. In mid-October the trees in Pennsylvania were brilliant. Although the day spent at Longwood Gardens was rainy, the gardens and Conservatory did not disappoint. Longwood Gardens were a private home of Pierre S. du Pont, and consists of 1,077 acres of beautifully landscaped grounds and fountains.

### *The Conservatory*

Although the main fountain gardens were closed for the season, there were several areas with water fountains running. The topiary trees were beautiful. Cement pathways lead from one garden room into another. The flower garden walk was still brilliant with fall color even though frost had touched it. Beautiful red mums were blooming and shrubs were alive with color. The conservatory was constructed from 1919-1921. It is one of the world's greatest greenhouse structures with more than 4 acres of lush display gardens under glass. Each of its 20 rooms is filled with lush plants from around the world.

There is an orchid house, rose house, Mediterranean Garden, Tropical Terrace, Estate fruit house, and a large Main and East Conservatory. Outside the conservatory, there is a large waterlily and lotus collection.

The pathway to the Italian Garden was alive with color and ended at a metal gazebo with a large lake, just like a Monet painting. Better yet, I had it all to myself because it was raining! The du Pont house is open to visitors and showcases several paintings and pictures of Mr. du Pont's many business ventures.





## Presprouting Seeds

by Lorri Urban

“Tis the season,” as the saying goes. In this case it would be the Season of Seed-Starting. It’s time to get the flats and the potting mix ready for those seed orders that are arriving in your mail box.

A couple of years ago my husband was thoughtful enough to give me a copy of “The New Seed-starters Handbook” by Nancy Bubel. This year when I glanced through the Table of Contents I was intrigued by the subtitle “Presprouting Seeds.” Turning to that section, I discovered this is not about growing sprouts for salad/sandwich use, but rather starting seeds BEFORE you put them in your seed-starting flats. The information put forth in the book recommends presprouting for cucubits – cucumbers, squash, pumpkins, and melons – in order to have an earlier, more abundant harvest. Ms Bubel has also found that she has a higher rate of germination with these seeds by presprouting them. This is how you should start the process: 1. Dampen a double layer of paper towels or several layers of paper napkin, 2. Arrange the seeds on the

dampened paper, leaving some space between them, 3. Carefully roll the paper towel up and place it in a labeled plastic bag. (Labeling the towels would allow you to put several types of seeds in the same bag.), 4. Put the plastic bag in a warm place such as on top of the grow lights that are above your seed flats (The author puts them on top of her insulated hot water heater.), 5. Check the seeds each day. Even though there will be no signs of germination for a few days, this exposes the seeds to oxygen which is necessary for germination.

The first signs of life will be root development. (You will want to remove the seeds from their root hairs get entangled.) Plant the presprouted seeds into small plastic containers filled with a rich potting mix (not fertilizer-enhanced) and set them under your grow lights or in a very sunny window. It works best to plant only 1 to a pot as you’ll want to move them from there directly into the garden.

If some of the roots are entwined in the paper, just pull the paper off with the roots and plant it, too.

While the author does not mention presprouting flower seeds, some varieties of annual flowers need extra warmth to germinate – zinnias and cosmos come to mind. Any types that have hard coats, such as four-o’clocks, could be scarified first. I plan to try this.

I have used many of the tips in this book. If you like starting your own seeds, have got room on your shelf and enough money in your bank account, I would highly recommend adding “The New Seed-Starters Handbook” to your garden library.

It’s available on line from \$9.25 - \$12.89 (new & used) at the source I checked. It had five stars and 42 reviews.

*An example of pre-sprouted pea seeds*



## Master Gardener Classes Continued

### Connect Series—Webinars

**6:30-9:00pm @ Ext. Office**

**Feb. 12**—Native and Adaptive Plants for Nebraska

Kim Todd and Steve Rodie

---

**Feb. 19**—Drought Effects on Landscape Plants

John Fech

---

**Feb. 26**—Soil Science

Brad Jakobowski

---

**Mar. 5**—Plant Disease and Insects

Jim Kalisch and Amy Timmerman

---

**Mar. 12**—Container Gardening

Terri James

---

**Mar. 19**—Household Insects and Bedbugs

Barb Ogg

**March 26—6:30 pm**

Dodge Co Extension Office

“From the Ground Up: Small-Scale Vegetable Farming Two Years In” -Danelle Meyer

Danelle is an organic vegetable farmer who has started her own farm in Logan Iowa. She will present what she’s doing, learned, and where she’s headed when she visits with us in March.

---

### Remaining Saturday Master Gardener Classes:

**Saturday, Feb. 23**

9-noon: Weed Identification and Plant Selection  
Natalia Bjorklund

1-4: Fruit Trees, Small Fruits, and Edible Landscapes  
Vaughn Hammond

---

**Saturday March 9**

9-noon: Soil Science  
Brad Jakobowski

1-4: Turf Management, Disease, and Selection  
Sarah Browning

**This schedule was originally printed in the October newsletter... just a reminder of what’s going on!**

**Gardening at Lunch Series  
12:05-1:00 pm**

**Watch classes from your computer at home or work!**

To register go to:

**[http://  
marketplace.unl.edu/  
extension/programs](http://marketplace.unl.edu/extension/programs)**

Each class is 10\$

Feb. 20—Tree Hazards  
John Fech

Mar.6—Vegetable Gardening  
Sarah Browning

Apr. 3—Plant Disease  
Amy Timmerman

May 1—Outdoor Insects  
Nicole Stoner

