

Growing Up



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

April 2016

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Hello Master Gardeners!

Hi Everyone!

It's spring, I just know it! Nothing is more exciting after the rest of winter. I hope everyone has a great year and let me know of anything you'd like to see in the newsletter or taught at the office.

Natalia

Backyard Farmer

The Backyard Farmer TV program is Nebraska's place to go for all your gardening questions. It has been on the air for over 60 season and runs from the first Thursday in April to usually the second week in September.

Viewing times:

Thursdays- Channel 12 - 7:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Saturdays- Channel 12 - 10:00 - 11:00 a.m.

Sundays- Channel 12 "Create" - 11:00 a.m.

Nebraska Statewide Arboretum—Spring Affair

Largest Gardening Event in the Midwest
Saturday, April 23, 2016, 9:00 - 2:00 p.m.
Free Admission
Pavilion I at the Lancaster Event Center

Nebraska Statewide Arboretum's Spring Affair features more than 500 different varieties of plants, plant talks, concessions and garden vendors all under the same roof. Plants are selected for regional suitability, uniqueness and demand. Gardeners will find perennials, herbs, native plants, temperennials, vines and a variety of trees and shrubs – something for everyone. Plants are provided by Bluebird Nursery of Clarkson, Nebraska. And there's plenty of parking available.



Starting Seeds - By Betty Hamata

Why would anyone want to start seeds when transplants are so readily available?

If you are like me and plant a lot of annuals the obvious answer is that it so much cheaper to start seeds. When a 4" pot can cost \$5.00 and a packet of seeds costs around \$3.00 that is a substantial savings. Another reason is that not all varieties are available at garden centers.



Calibrachoa - Million Bells

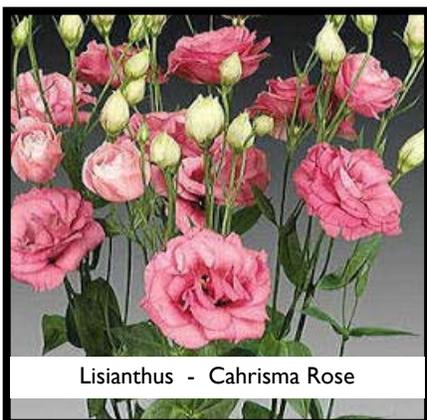
I order my seeds early in January from Parks seeds as their catalog has great pictures and descriptions. This year they offered Calibrachoa (million bells) for the first time, cost \$3.31 for a packet of ten seeds. I started 3 packets in late February and have had almost 100% germination. I use a lot of these in containers. I also start Angelonia and Lisianthus early and Vinci early. The others like Marigolds and Zinnias I start around April 1st.

I do not have a heated greenhouse, but have a sunroom that gets a lot of light. I start by reading the package directions and use Jiffy mix soilless mix which I wet thoroughly and then place in shallow containers. Fast food containers with a plastic lid work well. I then broadcast the seeds, press down and use a spray bottle to water them, keep covered, mist when needed and keep them in a well-lighted area, but not direct sun. I do use a heat mat if the weather is cold or it is cloudy for several days. After germination, I uncover and place in a brighter light. After getting their first true leaves, I use a 1/4 strength fertilizer to water them about every 10 days and grow them in sunlight.



Angelonia - Serenita Purple

When they are big enough, I transplant them into 4-paks with potting soil, and grow them on in my unheated greenhouse. I fertilize every 2 weeks. When the weather is getting warmer outside, around May 1st I place the flats outside during the day for about 4 hours a day to harden off to get used to the sun and winds that we always have in Nebraska. Be sure to keep well watered. After about one week they are ready to go out to their permanent home.



Lisianthus - Cahrisma Rose

I do like to go out to the garden centers to see what is new but have sometimes become frustrated when the tag does not match the plant in the pot. When I start my own seeds, I know the variety and can save a lot of money at the same time. Have a great growing year!

Zinnias - They're no longer eyesores

By Lorraine Urban



Did you know that the National Garden Bureau* designated 2011 as The Year of the Zinnia? As far as I'm concerned, every year should be the "Year of the Zinnia." The Zinnia, a flower native to Mexico, South America, and the southern U.S., was called "mal de ojos" (sickness of the eye) by Spanish explorers in the 1520s. The plants had small flowers in neutral colors and grew all over the place just like weeds/eyesores. Why anyone decided to bring them to Europe in the 18th century seems a mystery to me, but that's what happened. The plant was called "Zinnia" after the German botanist Johann Gottfried Zinn (1727 – 1759) and breeding to make this hardy plant a whole lot prettier began. By the mid 19th century, plants with large, brightly-colored flowers were ready for prime time. The development of the large, dahlia-shaped variety in the 1920s spurred their popularity, and many Zinnia varieties have been AAS winners.

Zinnias are members of the same plant family as Asters; there are 20 species and more than 100 cultivars of annual and perennial Zinnias, among them *elegans* (the common Zinnia), *angustifolia* (narrower leaves and smaller single flower), and *haageana* (Mexican Zinnia, least known, with small bi-colored flowers).

My garden always has some Zinnias. Some years I thought I'd leave them out of my landscape plans only to find myself picking up a pack of seeds at the last minute. I've started seeds indoors and then planted them outside when all danger of frost had passed; I've direct-sown seeds. Zinnias do well either way. The past three years I have waited to plant them (either the seeds or seedlings) until about the 2nd week of June. That way I have strong-flowering plants in late summer to attract butterflies (including Monarchs) which are around at that time of the year.



Powdery mildew and alternaria blight (reddish brown spots on foliage and flowers) can be problems for Zinnias. To keep plants healthy, they should be given space enough for summer breezes to easily move through – to grow without being crowded. They should be watered regularly, if it doesn't rain, but NOT over the tops of the leaves.



Zinnias are sun-lovers and insect magnets that grow in most ordinary soils with no fuss. They can be 3' tall ("Cherry") or only 8 - 12" high (Profusion Series, no dead-heading needed), bright and showy ("Crystal White") or pastel and subtle ("Youth and Old Age"), have flat rounded petals ("Green Envy") or curved pointed ones ("Cactus"). The flowers are beautiful used in bouquets and can be dried for winter arrangements. This diversity, plus the unusually wide range of colors, makes it possible to find a Zinnia to enhance every garden, especially yours (and mine).

*NGB (ngb.org/index.cfm), a resource for this article, is a nonprofit organization of which many seed companies are members.

Building a Small Container Garden - By Rich Apking

In my own defense, this is the first time I've ever attempted a "How To" article, and just to complicate it a little more, there's pictures. Well, here goes.

Material List:

5ea 2x4-8ft long, \$1.98 each
 3ea 1x2-8 ft long furring strips, .85 each
 1ea AC2 Decking, 10ft long, 5.00 each
 2ea All Purpose Tub, 6.25 each

Photo #1 shows the material cut for the container garden. From left: top frame, legs, lower rack, blocking on legs, and in the rear, the two tubs.



Photo #1 - Cut Materials

Cut the material as follows:

Top Frame:

Decking, 2 pieces 54-1/2 inches for the sides of the top frame

2x4, 3 pieces 18-1/4 inches for the ends and middle piece of the top frame

Furring strip, 2 pieces 20-5/8 inches to reinforce under the tubs in the top frame

Photo #2 shows the completed top frame,

Photo #3 shows the tubs installed.



Photo #2 - Completed top frame

Legs: 2x4, 4 pieces 36 inches (I beveled the top of mine, but it's not necessary)

Photo #4 shows the legs attached to the top frame,
Photo #5 shows how I attached the legs and the top blocking installed.



Photo #3 - Tubs installed

Upper and Lower Blocking on the legs:

Upper blocking: 2x4, 4 pieces 17-5/8 inches; lower blocking 2x4 4pieces 9 inches. As shown in picture 5, the top blocking goes against the bottom of the top frame. The lower blocking goes at the bottom of the leg. There should be a 3-1/2 inch gap between the two pieces of blocking.

Lower Rack: 2x4, 2 pieces 54-1/2 inches for the sides; 2x4, 2 pieces 17-1/2 inches for the ends; 1x2, 7 pieces 20-5/8 inches for the slats on the lower rack. The lower rack is shown installed in pictures 6 and 7.

I didn't show it in the pictures, but I drilled two 1 inch holes in the bottom of each tub for drainage, and hot glued a 3inch by 3 inch piece of window screen over each hole so the soil in the tubs wouldn't run out.

I plan on using my container garden mainly for herbs, and will place it near the back door for convenient access and watering. The big plus for me is no more bending and stooping to pick a few herbs. Hope you enjoyed this and that you build one for yourself. Happy Gardening, Rich



Photo #4 - Legs attached



Photo #5 - Legs and top blocking installed



Photo #6 - lower rack installed



Photo #7 - Finished Table

Opportunities

Dodge County's "Plant a Wagon" Project

Dodge County Fair 2016 Theme
"We've Got a Good Thing Growing"



You are invited to participate in the "Plant a Wagon" project at the Dodge County Fairgrounds. Show your love for flowers, plants and the fair!



Step 1: Select any type and size of wagon.



Step 2: Fill your wagon with your choice of plants.



Step 3: By July 1 contact the Dodge County Extension Office to reserve a spot for your wagon at the Dodge County Fair. 402-727-2775 or email: lpoppe2@unl.edu



Step 4: Bring your wagon to the Dodge County Fairgrounds in Scribner, Nebraska on August 3. Your wagon will be on display with your name, club name or business name during the fair, August 4-7, 2016.



Step 5: You may pick up your wagon after 8:00 pm on Sunday, August 7 or during the day on Monday, August 8.



Sponsored by: The Dodge County Fair and the Dodge County 4-H Program



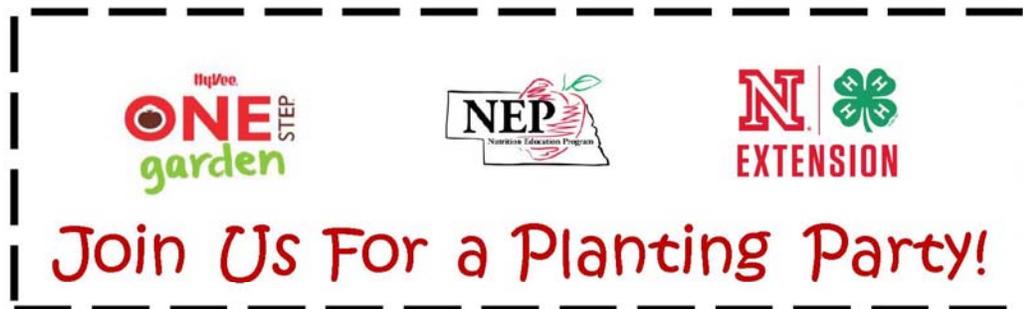

This project is for enhancement purposes of the fairgrounds and there will be no prizes awarded. You are solely responsible for your display and the Fair board and 4-H program is not liable for any damages.



Opportunities

Volunteers Needed

The flyer below outlines a "Planting Party" that is happening on Saturday, May 14th. If you are interested in volunteering some of your time to help with the planting and up keep of this garden please contact The Dodge County Extension Office at 402-727-2775 and ask to visit with Kathy Kneifl.



This summer, your Fremont Hy-Vee will partner with University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension to offer a 6-week educational community garden program aimed to improve children's knowledge and interest in growing and eating vegetables!

Saturday, May 14, 2016

1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Location: Fremont Community Garden Plot

Located at Linden & Michael Street

Cost: FREE! - Ages: 4-12

Register at Hy-Vee customer service ~ space is limited!
(Parents must accompany child to the community garden.)



Call your Fremont Hy-Vee at 402.727.6717

or

Dodge County Extension office at 402.727.2775 for more information.

UPCOMING EVENTS**Spring into Spring - Lauritzen Gardens**

Open to the public—May 14, 2016 from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Members online plant sale—Friday, May13, 4:30 TO 7 P.M.

- Discover new ideas for you garden at the Spring into Spring Plant Sale. Shop from a hand-picked selection of plants from area garden clubs and Lauritzen Gardens.
- Beautiful containers designed and planted exclusively by Lauritzen Gardens staff
- Plant experts on-site to answer questions
- Live music on the festival garden terrace frm 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
- Standard garden admission rates apply.
- Check out the details by going to lauritzengardens.org

Fremont 4-H Fair

July 6—9, 2016

Location: Christensen Field, I6 & Riederoad Drive, Fremont, NE

4-H & FFA Exhibitors from the following counties: Burt, Butler, Colfax, Cuming, Dodge, Douglas, Sarpy, Saunders and Washington.
Sponsored by: Fremont 4-H Fair and Nebraska Extension

Dodge County Fair

August 3—7, 2016

Location: Dodge County Fairgrounds, Fairacres Road, Scribner, NE

Information about 4-H & FFA events can be found at <http://extension.unl.edu/statewide/dodge/dcexhibitorguide/>

Information about Activities, Events and Entertainment can be found at dodgecountyfair.org

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