

# The Green Patch

## Companion Planting

By Robin Jones, Master Gardener



If you're like most people, you're trying to make greener choices in your life. Your garden is a great place to start. A lot of people think the only way to keep nasty pests away from their plants is to use chemicals and pesticides. There is another way and it's much simpler than you think. It's called companion planting.

The concept of companion planting has been around for ages. It's all about grouping together plants in a way that helps them repel insects. Some plants are good for keeping the bugs away no matter where you put them and others do it well specifically when they grow near certain plants. I specialize in flower gardening, but many of the tips in this article can cross over to vegetable gardening as well.

The best plants for generally deterring all types of harmful insects are chamomile, marigolds, and wormwood. Chamomile and marigolds work best when you spread them throughout your garden, while wormwood is most effective as a border. Wormwood is quite effective at keeping not only insects away, but also animals that might be interested in nibbling on your plants.

One of the most annoying bugs is the June bug. There are quite a few plants you can use to repel or even kill them. They include chrysanthemums and both red and white geraniums. Plant geraniums around your roses for extra protection. June bugs love to snack on white geraniums whose leaves are poisonous to them and will kill them so plant those anywhere you have a particular June bug problem.



If aphids are a problem in your garden, plant petunias and sweet alyssum. Lavender is a beautiful and fragrant plant that also gets rid of fleas, moths and whiteflies.

My favorite plants to use for companion planting are the ones that do double duty. Not only do they repel pests, but they also attract beauty to your garden in the form of butterflies and hummingbirds. Plant dill and let it bolt (flower). It will attract butterflies and, at the same time, keep aphids and spider mites away. In addition, dill attracts ladybugs which are very beneficial in the garden because they feed on other insects that can cause damage.

Zinnias deter June bugs while they attract hummingbirds. The hummingbirds, in turn, will eat whiteflies. Sunflowers also attract hummingbirds and are very effective against aphids. Ants will actually herd aphids to the sunflowers, but the sunflowers are so hearty that the aphids won't hurt them at all. But they will leave your other plants alone!

If you want to step up your game as a gardener and witness how nature is designed to take care of itself without a bunch of harmful chemicals and pesticides, try companion planting in your garden this year.

Volume 2, Issue 3

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## American Garden Award—Voting Now Open!

DOWNERS GROVE, IL - MAY 5, 2010 All-America Selections is pleased to announce that the 2010 American Garden Award (AGA) is now open for voting. AGA is a unique opportunity for the general public as well as professional horticulturists to vote on a specific flower or plant that they think has the most appealing garden characteristics. Some of the world's most prestigious flower breeders have chosen their best varieties to enter into this competition (varieties listed below). In cooperation with eighteen highly respected public gardens throughout the United States, listed below, All-America Selections presents the four entries so garden visitors can view the plants in person, then vote for their favorite.

There are a number of ways to vote: by texting a given code to a polling number, by going to [www.americangardenaward.com](http://www.americangardenaward.com) and clicking on the voting button, by using postage-paid voting postcards available at most gardens or by becoming a fan of American Garden Award on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/american.garden.award). For anyone who is unable to visit one of those eighteen gardens, online voting is another way to "View and Vote!" All gardens will be planted by the first of June and voting is open until August 31, 2010. The winners will be announced in September.

**The four entries are:**

**Echinacea 'Prairie Splendor TM'**  
**Rudbeckia 'Denver Daisy'**

**Ornamental Pepper 'Purple Flash'**  
**Zinnia Profusion 'Knee-High Red'**

# 2010 Plant Fair

By Deb Daehnke, Master Gardener

The annual Plant Fair was another resounding success in 2010. What started as a discussion between Kathy Hayes and Chris Carlson almost twenty years ago has become a premier event in Northeast Nebraska. We continue to grow, adding vendors, speakers and demonstrations for our patrons. It is our annual fund raising endeavor. We raise money for scholarships the Northeast Nebraska Master Gardeners award to Northeast Community College horticulture students. It also offers us a venue to provide up-to-date gardening information to patrons who attend the plant fair. And last but definitely not least, gives master gardeners the opportunity to assist, fulfill some of their volunteer service time, and share fellowship with the other members.



Bluebird Nursery in Clarkson NE supplied our plant area with both annuals and perennials to sell this year and has supplied at least the perennials throughout our history. They were some of the nicest plants we have ever received from them and patrons depleted our supplies of some plants by 8:00pm on Friday evening. Shirley Hamernik was one of our Saturday morning speakers. She called Ellen Glanzer, asked what plants we were low on, and graciously brought us more. Bluebird has always been an exemplary business to work with.



We benefited from excellent vendors again. Some were tried and true and have been with us for years while others were with us for the first time, and will hopefully come back for many years to come. WJAG was one of the primary sponsors and advertisers for us and was instrumental in making the first decorated hat contest quite the success. If you were able to attend the Plant Fair, please patronize and thank any vendor that was there. Without them we could not have the success we do.

As mentioned above, the first decorated hat contest was held with the theme, "Garden Tea Party". A winner was chosen from Master Gardeners and from the public. Carolyn Lingenfelter won the prize for the Master Gardeners and Irene Hart from Norfolk won the other prize. This was such a hit that it could become an annual event.

Rosie Frey demonstrated cooking tips for seasoning with herbs. HyVee assisted with providing supplies for the demonstrations. This is growing into a very popular addition and next year we will probably need to find her a bigger, quieter space. She had no trouble finding takers to sample her specialties.



We have been sending post cards for the last few years to remind the previous year's attendees that the plant fair was approaching. We hope to expand that next year and send post cards to our young gardening friends and get the next generation interested. If you know of a young gardener who would like to receive a postcard, contact Deb Daehnke at 375-1694 with information.

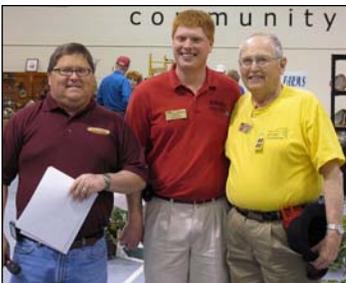


If you have never attended the Northeast Nebraska Master Gardeners Plant Fair, mark your calendar for April 29-30, 2011. Admission is free and there's a little something for everyone: great plants, wonderful vendors, a concession stand, children's corner, and door prizes. In addition, our speakers always inform us with an array of excellent topics. If you would like to be a vendor, contact Pam at the Wayne County Extension Office and she can put you in touch with the chair of the Vendor Committee. Gardeners or crafters are welcome.

We will be celebrating our 20 year anniversary in 2013. Maybe there will be something even more special planned.

## Master Gardener Awards - Congratulations!!!

The 2010 Plant Fair was honored to have Roch Gaussoin, UNL Extension Turfgrass Specialist, State Master Gardener Coordinator, and Backyard Farmer panelist, attend and present a session on Weed Control in Lawns and Landscapes. He also presented Master Gardeners with their ten year certificate and hand carved wooded bowl. Three Master Gardeners achieving this status in 2009 were Carroll French, Wyman McCain, and Vicki Wagner. The State Program recently started awarding years of service. The ten year award is new this year so they decided to present to the award winners retroactively. These were awarded to Darlene Bennett, Rita Cox, Joyce Eucker, Ellen Glanzer, Marge Holland, Marjorie Jansen, Robin Jones, Janice Ladehoff, Dorrine Liedman, Phyllis McCain, Beverly McClure, Marion Pestel, Fran Schweers, Karen Zierke, and Vlasta Zrust. Congratulations everyone for meeting this big milestone!!



# Youth Horticulture plant identification contest held at Plant Fair

As part of the Northeast Nebraska Master Gardener plant fair, a youth horticulture plant identification contest was held. Area youth were invited to participate in the competition. A total of six youth participated with two in the junior division and four in the intermediate division. There were no senior division participants. Each contestant was asked to identify 20 plants. A tiebreaker plant had to be used to decide the junior division 1<sup>st</sup> place finisher. Shanda Lambert of Wayne placed first in the junior division with Sidney Kucera of Madison placing second. The difference between first and second places in the intermediate division was only one plant correctly identified. Laura Greunke of Winside narrowly edged out Kaylyn Kucera of Madison for the first place finish. Rachel Sorensen placed third and Stephanie Sorensen also of Plainview placed fourth in the intermediate division. Thank you to Mulch N More, Rosie Frey, Don Liedman, and Pam Greunke for providing additional plants for the contest.



## Garden Tea Party Hats

By Carolyn Lingenfelter, Master Gardener

Decorated hats were worn by more than 30 entering the first Garden Tea Party Hat Contest. Since this was the first year for the contest there were only a few public participants.

The hats had a wide range of ideas in their creation. They were fancy, clever, fun, and comical. The gals from the radio station were privileged to have the station manager's wife decorate their exotic hats.

The public winner was Irene Hart with great help from her husband Gene. They returned home to fashion a hat, then campaigned for the winning votes. This was reported in the Daily News story. However, the story of



the runner-up Gary Lingenfelter you maybe didn't hear. As Carolyn was hurrying to collect things and get out to the fair, Gary came home and said, "Help me with this hat". One he had picked up from who knows where. He wanted the dried plum blossoms he had picked for Carolyn a week earlier to be put on it. Then as he went to the college he collected a few more items along the way. He had fun with it and Carolyn has learned it is easier to go along with his



fun and pretend the word embarrass does not exist.

As it turned out Carolyn Lingenfelter was the winner of the Master Gardeners entries, with Robin Jones the runner-up. Robin's campaign slogan was "Vote for me, I'm number 3" Carolyn's was "It would be great to vote for number 8"

**The hats had a wide range of ideas in their creation. They were fancy, clever, fun, and comical.**

Hopefully, this added new interest to the fair for the public and was fun for all who participated.

(The public is always looking for something NEW, so if anyone has ideas of new events we can incorporate into the fair, please make note of them for discussion.)

## Self Sow Annuals

By Marilyn Schmit, Platte County Master Gardener

Some of my favorite annuals are those that readily self-sow. Open pollinated and heirloom varieties of any plant will grow true from seed, meaning the seedlings will be exactly like the parent plants. If you let certain annuals mature and set seed, they will reward you next year with another season of free plants. Free plants are about as good as it gets! Sometimes there may be a plant that is very enthusiastic; resulting in too many plants or seedlings where you don't want them. These can be transplanted to another location or pulled out when they are small plants. They can also be dug up and given to other people. Giving away plants to another gardener is such a rewarding benefit of self-sown annuals.



Bachelor buttons



Hollyhock

I love that I get really early blooms from self-sown bachelor buttons, larkspur, Johnny jump-up viola, and flax. The plants get a head start since the seeds are already planted and ready to burst onto the scene in early

spring. I have an abundance of cosmos, amaranth, bells of Ireland, hollyhock, moss rose, cleome, verbena bonariensis, moon flower, cockscomb, gloriosa daisy, and marigolds. There are enough for my garden and plenty to share with friends. Sweet pea, morning glory, and hyacinth bean vines also show up to climb up a trellis or fence.



Larkspur

I think the appearance of self-sown annuals popping up throughout the flower bed gives the impression that I have worked really hard to place all those plants in my garden in exactly the right location. People think I have a master plan to weave all those colors and textures together. Sometimes nature is better at that job than I am.



Hyacinth Bean Vine

## Raspberries Recommended

By Maxine Haswell, Master Gardener

How time flies when you're having fun in the garden and yard. I was looking back over old Master Gardener articles and found this article I wrote in August 2001. That's nine years ago!!

Of all the plants I've ever planted, my raspberries have been my pride and joy. These same plants (with the new ones that come up voluntarily) are still producing each fall. Maybe there will be those that did not read my article 9 years ago. I still recommend raspberries for an easy fruit to grow, pick, and freeze.

**(Original article written—August 15, 2001)**

Here it is August. As this month began, it brought raspberries to our table. We have raspberries for three meals a day with plenty to freeze for later use. The grandchildren like to pick and eat them right from the patch for a quick snack.

Several years ago, I read a seed catalog about the fall raspberry "Heritage". They were advertised for Zone 4-8, with vigorous, upright canes that require little or no staking and as easy to pick. The fruit is

large, bright red and firm. They bear from August until it freezes.

I couldn't resist the pictures and thoughts of fresh raspberries. I ordered 10 plants and found the right place in our backyard. They have produced well above my expectations. In the peak of the season, I pick large bowls full each morning.

Three years ago, I was reading the same seed catalog. It featured a new variety, "Autumn Bliss". They looked and sounded even better than the Heritage variety as they start producing a little earlier with bigger and sweeter berries. Of course, I thought I would have to try a few (actually six) of these plants. They, too, have done as promised. If you are allergic or afraid of bumble bees, you may not want to pick berries. I've picked raspberries all of these years and have not been stung.



Raspberry plants are so great because when they freeze in the fall, you clip or mow the canes at ground level. Last year I read that if you leave the canes until spring, you would increase production so that's what I did. I will not do that again as with our snow last winter; it was hard to get them clipped soon enough. It ended up being a more difficult job and also some of the canes had already leafed out. It is best to clip the canes in the fall and cover the stubs with some leaf and grass mulch from fall yard mowing.

Not all of the things I plant are a success, but the raspberries have certainly done great!

*Want more information on Raspberries?*

*Click on links below:*

[NebGuide G1580—Growing Raspberries](#)

[UNL Extension: Acreage Insights article on Raspberries by Vaughn Hammond, UNL Extension Technologist](#)

# 4-H and Master Gardener Horticulture Contest

By Dorrine Liedman, Master Gardener



In spite of the recent rainy and windy weather, it was a pleasingly warm and quiet evening for the fifth annual 4-H Horticulture Plant Identification Contest held June 16 at the farm of Donald and Dorrine Liedman.

Ten 4-H members from Madison, Pierce, Stanton, and Wayne Counties were in attendance. They identified thirty vegetables, flowers, and trees. Rachel Sorensen and Nicole Sorensen of Pierce County were first and second place winners respectively for identifying the most plants. The three Wayne County 4-Hers, Laura Greunke, Grace Heithold, and Sylvia Jager, tied for third place. It took three tie breakers to get the winner which went to Sylvia Jager. Garden perennials were given to the top three winners.

The 4-Hers, accompanied by Master Gardener Jim Laycock, toured the gardens to review the plants that were identified.

Twenty-one Master Gardeners and friends were present and ten took part identifying fifteen plants by name. After a two way tie between Master Gardeners, Pearl Laycock and Teresa Roche, a flip of the coin determined Teresa the winner of a garden perennial plant.

Following the horticulture competition, Master Gardener Karen Zierke, gave a demonstration on how to properly prepare root crops for entry to the county fair. The 4-Hers worked together in cutting the roots and stalks then chose the correct number needed that met the requirements. Karen also demonstrated the proper preparations to exhibit flowers. She showed the 4-Hers a book that is available at the Extension offices on the preparation of vegetables and fruit at the county fair.

To close the evening, snacks were provided by the Extension offices.

Wayne Ohnesorg, Wayne & Pierce County Extension Educator, Jim Laycock, and Donald Liedman were in charge of preparing and carrying out the contest.



University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension experts from many disciplines work together to help acreage owners manage their rural living environment through unbiased, research-based information that can be found at the web site:

<http://environment.unl.edu/acreage>. This site is designed to help acreage residents manage their acreage sustainably.

Beginning in May, Environment.unl.edu/acreage will offer new print and visual features each month. Monthly offerings will include the continuation of our successful email newsletter, which features timely articles on managing water, ornamental landscapes, food-crop plantings, wildlife, and much more. A new monthly web "show" will provide visual educational offerings on landscapes, water resources, keeping animals, attracting wildlife, managing pests and weeds, producing food on the acreage, entrepreneurial considerations, and opportunities for youth. Other new monthly offerings include an acreage commentary entitled "Views from the Land," a drinking water question and answer section, a featured Nebraska animal of the month, and a featured plant of the month, a calendar of events, and much more.



Perhaps most importantly, the UNL Acreage Team wants to hear from acreage residents. The team will solicit theme-related pictures each month, and selected photos will be posted on the web site. The team also encourages acreage residents to send questions and pictures of problem areas on their acreage which team members will address.

All information can be found at <http://environment.unl.edu/acreage>. The new cache of information will be available on the first Monday of each month. In addition to the monthly features, the web site will include a great deal of other valuable information available for acreage residents to use in their daily life.

Finally, you can follow Acreage Insights on Facebook and Twitter, for timely updates.



*Our garden has been flooded by water from the Elkhorn River. Will peas & potatoes be safe to eat if they are washed thoroughly before being cooked. How about raw vegetables? I assume tomatoes & corn will be okay since neither is very mature. I am concerned about E-coli.* **Beverly McClure**

Bev,

This is a common question. Since we have no idea what might come in with the floodwaters (herbicides, bacteria, etc.) - we cannot tell people it is safe to eat the produce, even with washing.

Basically, we tell them to make that decision for themselves and if they choose to eat the produce, then we provide these tips:

1. Better safe than sorry if not sure
2. As soon as floodwaters recede, wash the plants off to remove sludge, residue, etc.
3. Do not eat edible parts present at the time of the flood, i.e. lettuce, spinach, radish, etc.
4. If residues of herbicide, etc. are left behind in the soil, plants may take these up. If plants show signs of herbicide injury, i.e. curling, cupping of leaves, etc. - probably best to be safe rather than sorry and not eat.
6. Any produce that is harvested and eaten needs to be thoroughly washed after harvest and prior to eating.

Hope this helps.

**Kelly Feehan**  
Extension Educator

#### Helpful hint from Jim Laycock, Master Gardener:

When pruning roses or any other plant, get a misting or spray bottle and put rubbing alcohol or another sanitizing solution, that won't hurt your plant, in it. After each cut, spray a quick spritz on your pruners or loppers blades and you are ready for the next cut. Be sure to dry the blades off and put on a light coat of oil before you put them away to prevent rust.

#### Vicky Hingst, Master Gardener, warned everyone at the meeting about Cocoa Mulch possibly being harmful to dogs.

Here is excerpt from a news article on March 21, 2010 from Elizabeth Killinger, Extension Educator.

"Organic Mulches- Organic mulches will break down over time and often become nutrients for the soil as organic matter. Some examples of organic mulches include: cypress mulch, pine bark mulch, cocoa mulch, dyed mulches, pine needles,

chopped leaves, and even newspaper. There are many advantages to using this category of mulch. The first is that the products are biodegradable and will break down over time. By using organic mulches you can improve your soil quality just by letting the products break down naturally. Organic mulch may need to be reapplied every couple of years due to the breakdown of materials. The second advantage is that they are readily available and often are very pocketbook friendly. One disadvantage to this type of mulch is that it might blow away in the wind. This can be prevented by either using a larger 'chunk' type of mulch or by applying mulch that will mesh together.

*\*\* A word of caution if you are planning on using cocoa mulch, it can be toxic to some breeds of dogs. Cocoa mulch is made up of the hulls from the cocoa bean. Dogs and some cats are attracted to the smell of the cocoa mulch and eat it; this can prove to be fatal.*

For more information, e-mail Elizabeth Killinger at [ekillinger2@unl.edu](mailto:ekillinger2@unl.edu), call 308-385-5088, or visit the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Extension website: [hall.unl.edu](http://hall.unl.edu)



## Curbside Plantings are a Gift to the Neighborhood

What's the biggest landscape challenge on your property? For many homeowners, it's a curbside strip of soil surrounded by hardscape or buildings -- difficult to mow, almost impossible to water without runoff, possibly shaded for part of the day and exposed to harsh sunlight other times. Often it has to withstand foot traffic, pet refuse and sand or salt from winter snow removal.

It also needs to be accessible for water and sewer line maintenance and meet city street codes, which vary by community (in Lincoln, curbside plants need to be less than 30 inches above the curb and not extend over curbs or sidewalks).

With all those constraints and demands, it can take some time and care to turn that eyesore into a thing of beauty, but it's well worth the initial effort. With good planning, it can require less maintenance in the future and be a gift both to yourself and to neighbors and passersby.

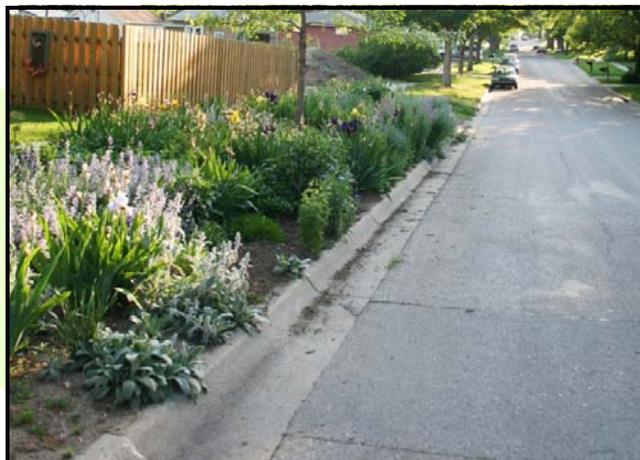
If the soil is heavy clay, you may want to rejuvenate it with topsoil or compost. This can be difficult in a large area, but another option is to begin the process with "pocket plantings" and simply place a spadeful or two of rich soil with each new plant.

Plants for curbside planting

What plants are up to the challenge? Prairie plants meet many of the requirements for tough spots since they're deep-rooted

to withstand drought, heat and exposure, are adaptable to difficult soils and need very little care. Here are other plants worth trying.

For groundcovers consider: wild strawberry; prairie smoke; ajuga; snow-in-summer; plumbago; lamb's ears; bloody cranesbill; and Corydalis. For salt-tolerance, good groundcovers include: candytuft; sedum; coral bells; hosta; and Artemisia.



Low-maintenance grasses like blue and sideoats grama, buffalograss and switchgrass can be used to replace turf. For spring color, they can be interplanted with bulbs that will be showy until the grasses fill in and eventually cover the dead foliage of the short tulips, squill, tiny irises (Iris reticulata) or other bulbs planted among the grasses.

Lawn alternatives for shade or part shade include: Epimedium, sweet woodruff, dead nettle, and Pachysandra.

Low perennials for hot, dry areas are: evening primrose; day-lily; feverfew; yarrow; basket-of-gold; purple poppy mallow; prairie phlox; pasque flower; coneflower; butterfly milkweed; curly or prairie onion; and aromatic aster.

###

6/2/10-KL Source: Karma Larsen, communications associate, Nebraska Forest Service, (402) 472-7923, klarsen1@unl.edu  
ITGJune.2 Editor: Dan Moser, IANR News Service, (402) 472-3030, dmoser3@unl.edu

### The Flower Show

Two little old ladies were sitting on a park bench outside the local town hall where a flower show was in progress. The thin one leaned over and said, 'Life is so boring. We never have any fun any more. For \$10, I'd take my clothes off and streak through that stupid flower show!' 'You're on!' said the other old lady, holding up a \$10 bill. The first little old lady slowly fumbled her way out of her clothes and, completely naked, streaked (as fast as an old lady can) through the front door of the flower show. Waiting outside, her friend soon heard a huge commotion inside the hall, followed by loud applause and shrill whistling. Finally, the smiling and naked old lady came through the exit door surrounded by a cheering crowd. 'What happened?' asked her waiting friend. 'I won 1st prize as 'Best Dried Arrangement'.



### The Green Patch Contributors

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Do you have a favorite tool, plant to trade, "Go Green" idea, "What Works for Me" tidbit or a question for other Master Gardeners?

The Green Patch needs your articles.

Please get to Pam Greunke (pgreunke2@unl.edu) by August 31 to be included in October's *The Green Patch* publication.

## Northeast Nebraska Master Gardeners

Meetings held at:  
UNL Extension - Madison County  
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Master Gardeners are people who love plants,  
gardening, landscaping, and teaching others.



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<http://madison.unl.edu/home-lawn>

## What is It?? By Wayne Ohnesorg, Extension Educator

Your challenge is to correctly identify the insect and/or plant. The first person to contact me with the correct answer will be the winner. And what do you win? Good question. The winner will receive the bragging rights for that quarter and have their name posted in the next installment of the column as the winner along with the correct answer.

Congratulations to Master Gardener in training Connie Dvorak for providing the correct answer! She correctly identified last quarter's *What is it?* as a bagworm. Besides being unsightly themselves, large numbers of bagworms can remove enough foliage to make woody ornamentals less attractive. Lancaster County Extension has a good webpage on bagworms: <http://lancaster.unl.edu/hort/bagworms.shtml>.



This quarter's insect came to me from out in the Long Pine area. This insect occurs in large groups on trees.

What is this insect???

If you think you know, you can give me a call at (402) 329-4821 or shoot me an email [wohnesorg2@unl.edu](mailto:wohnesorg2@unl.edu).

