

The Green Patch

Prize Pumpkins

By Jane Jensen , Pierce County Master Gardener

October 1, 2011

Volume 3, Issue 4

Is your prize pumpkin putting on the pounds for that festival in your area? Pumpkins are water lovers of the genus Cucurbata. This includes gourds and zucchini and winter squash, as it is known in Australia. The pumpkin, in fact, is grown on every continent except Antarctica. Its name originated from the Greek pepon, meaning large melon. Pumpkin related seeds have been found in Mexico dating back to 7000 B.C.

Wikipedia relates that pumpkins come in several colors including yellow, orange, white, green, red and even gray. Well over one billion pounds of pumpkins are grown in the US each year, mainly in the states of Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and California. They do not tolerate temperatures below 65 degrees so they are mainly planted in July. In the large fields, honeybee hives are provided one hive per acre, for honeybees play a significant role in pollination.

The pumpkin is quite versatile in its use. They can be eaten like zucchini when it is very small and green. I've tried it and it is very good. The seeds can be cleaned, salted and oven roasted for a snack food. Oil can be made from the seeds as well. Pumpkin juice can be added to blends for the health fanatic, and the pumpkin flower is used in posh restaurants for garnish and can be eaten. It is dredged in batter and fried in oil. Some veterinarians use canned pumpkin for dogs and cats with digestive ailments.



This time of year, pumpkin festivals are popular. Children picking out the perfect one to bring home is a joy to watch. Halloween jack o' lanterns are thought to ward off demons. Punkin' Chuckin', another use for the golden globes, is hilarious to watch. Whoever made up that event must have quite the comedic vein. There are some who breed pumpkins to withstand the landing for another category in the days' events. And don't forget Cinderella's horse-drawn carriage, which turned back into a pumpkin! However, the best use for me is the golden glory of the Thanksgiving or Christmas pie. Pass the whipped cream, please.



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NebGuide

Storing Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

Information Contributed by Kelly Feehan , Platte County Extension Educator

Harvesting fruits and vegetables from your garden at the proper stage of maturity is only the first step to fresh table quality. Proper harvesting and post-harvest handling methods, as well as proper storage of fruits and vegetables not immediately eaten, will help maintain the flavor, texture and nutritive value of the produce. Proper storage means controlling both the temperature and relative humidity of the storage area. All fruits and vegetables do not have the same requirements.

See the NebGuide, Storing Fresh Fruits and Vegetables, at this link to help select the best storage conditions for home-grown and purchased produce.

<http://www.ianrpubs.unl.edu/sendIt/g1264.pdf>

Are You A Serious Gardener?

By Janelle McIntyre , Platte County Master Gardener

We can judge how serious we are about gardening by these rules:

- ⇒ Do you spend more money on plants than on your wardrobe?
- ⇒ Do you buy plants that you don't need and have no room for?
- ⇒ Do you plan your vacation around visiting a botanical garden(s)?
- ⇒ Do you hide your plant purchase from your spouse?
- ⇒ Do you garden in the rain?



I must be a serious gardener. When purchasing clothes, I pride myself on a bargain (cheap really). But when it comes to plants, the latest and the best (my interpretation, of course) are what I look for. Is there room for the new acquisitions? Probably not! The need for filling in empty spots was over long ago.

A fellow Master Gardener recently told me about her vacation. It left me green with envy. She had visited two botanical gardens. I wonder if I can talk my spouse into that? He is very tolerant of my addiction. That being said, I have hidden plant purchases from him once or twice. Well, who can count, really?

Have to go, it rained last night. As everyone knows that's the best time to pull weeds.

Wedding Table Centerpieces

By Marge Holland , Cuming County Master Gardener

We went to a summer wedding reception and it was a beautiful affair. The bride was ecstatic, the groom was handsome and the bridesmaids and ushers were young and charming. But most of all, I was intrigued by the table centerpieces—pint fruit jars filled with colorful garden flowers. What a refreshing sight—no flamboyant, greenhouse creations, nothing a wedding planner dreamed up, just fresh flowers from someone's Midwest garden. Marigolds, zinnias, feverfew, gaillardias, cosmos interspersed with sprigs of green from summer shrubs were all tastefully arranged in Mason jars.

I suppose the bride's mother, perhaps her grandmother, her aunts and probably the neighbors planted the seeds in the spring, and nurtured those flowers in their own gardens in anticipation of the big event. I imagine they watered and cared for them through the

July heat—and then as the weather cooled, all their efforts came into fruition. On the morning of the wedding, they gathered the blooms and arranged them in the jars to be placed on each table. They were stunning in their simplicity.

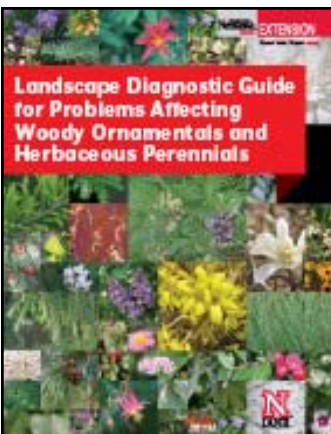
The bride and groom will remember those centerpieces, for they were a gift from the heart and the hoe.



Picture found at <http://emmalinebride.com/>

Landscape Diagnostic Guide

For Problems Affecting Woody Ornamentals and Herbaceous Perennials



This guide provides information on problems commonly associated with woody and herbaceous perennials of the upper Midwest. Detailed information about when and where the problems are observed, signs and symptoms, and treatment methods are included for each problem.

Landscape problems can be caused by living (biotic) or nonliving (abiotic) sources. Biotic pests include insects, mites, fungi, viruses, bacteria, and wildlife. Abiotic problems develop from environmental (temperature, wind, moisture), site (soil, compaction), cultural (pruning, mower blight), chemical (spills), or nutritional (excess or deficiency) problems.

See online at <http://byf.unl.edu/landscape-diagnostic-guide>

Bagworm



Water Conservation Tips

It is no secret that water is one of our most needed and increasingly precarious resources. And as some Nebraskans continue to reel from minor to severe drought conditions, it seemed appropriate to share ideas that would allow gardeners to reduce their water usage outdoors while maintaining a beautiful lawn and garden. Couple the following suggestions with ideas to reduce water consumption inside your home, and you could realize substantial savings in utility costs as well. Plus you can use the slower winter months to develop a check list to determine where you can save water usage.

Accustomed to having water available at the twist of a faucet, we often do not realize how much water we use or waste and awareness can be our first step to conservation and responsible stewardship toward this resource. Watering lawns and gardens can double normal household water use during the hot, dry summer months. At standard household water pressures, a garden hose will discharge up to 6 ½ gallons of water per minute. To apply an inch of water to 1,000 square feet of lawn or garden requires 620 gallons of water. Multiply this by thousands of households and those figures speak volumes about our water use or abuse.

If reducing water usage for environmental reasons isn't enough to pique your interest to conserve, consider your savings in dollars. You could save as little as a few dollars to hundreds of dollars per year with wise water management. Monitor your water meter for several months while journaling your water usage, especially during those peak summer months, and a pattern may emerge that shows where you might conserve. Many communities now encourage the use of water conservation devices and reward you for doing so. Some areas of the country actually pay homeowners to remove turf and plants that are water hogs and plant native varieties that are more water friendly.

You may have incorporated some of the following tips. If not, please consider giving some or all of them a try. They are painless and often require only a slight amount of additional time or work.

Plant drought tolerant vegetation. Native plant species are excellent choices and your local extension office or nurseries can offer suggestions. Planting a low water use plant for year round landscape color can save up to 550 gallons of water per year. Just remember, low water use does not mean the plants don't need any water, but they will require substantially less than many plants.

Plant during the spring or fall when the temperature is cooler and watering requirements are lower. Avoid planting in areas difficult to water such as steep inclines and isolated strips along driveways, where water will run off or puddle where it isn't needed. Plant drought tolerant ground covers in these hard to water areas. Don't water when windy.

Water your lawn and plants only when needed. 1" of water per week is a standard recommendation. Plus, watering deeply but less frequently helps plants and turf develop strong root systems that will be less stressed when water is in short supply. Check for soil moisture two to three inches below the surface before automatically watering. Monitor your sprinkler system frequently and adjust sprinklers so only your lawn is watered, not your house, driveway, or street. Install a rain shut-off device on your automatic sprinklers to eliminate unnecessary watering. Invest in a rain gauge to track how much rain or irrigation your lawn receives. Check the sprinkler system valves and heads for leaks. Use sprinklers that deliver big drops of water close to the ground. Smaller drops and mist often evaporate before they hit the ground,

By Deb Daehnke , Wayne County Master Gardener

especially when windy. Aerate or thatch your lawn as needed thus allowing more water to actually reach the roots. If you allow your children to run through the sprinkler or fill a small swimming pool, then do so in a lawn area that needs the water when they are finished.

Water during early morning hours, when temps are cooler, to minimize evaporation. Water small areas of grass by hand to avoid waste. If you must run a non-automated hose or sprinkler, set a timer to remind you when to stop. Adjust your lawn mower to a higher setting and mow as infrequently as possible. Longer grass will reduce the loss of water to evaporation. Mowing also puts your lawn under additional stress causing it to require more water.

Collect some of the water you use in the house, such as when rinsing produce, and use on your houseplants or in the garden. Does your fish tank need cleaning? Your plants would love to receive this nutrient rich water. Use a hose nozzle while watering or washing your car. You could save up to 100 gallons of water every time. Or wash your car on the grass if possible thereby watering your lawn at the same time. Does your pet need a bath?

Perform that duty on the lawn as well. Collect the water from an evaporative air conditioner. Build a small patio that eliminates turf or plants, provides you with another "room", and requires no water.

Check outdoor faucets, pipes, and hoses for leaks. If you can't fix the leak immediately, try to collect the water in a bucket to use later. Choose water-efficient drip irrigation for your trees, shrubs, and flowers. Again, infrequent, but deep watering develops strong roots. Don't over water. More plants die from over-watering than under-watering.

Having a pond installed? Use a reputable installer and continually monitor the pond. Ornamental water features and ponds should be equipped with recirculation pumps. Group plants according to their watering needs and mulch them; better yet, plant a xeriscape garden or landscape. While fertilizers promote plant growth, they also increase water consumption. Apply the minimum amount of fertilizer needed or try an organic approach. Weed regularly so they don't compete with your plants. Plant drought tolerant shrubs or ground covers, or try a rock garden.

Collect and use rain water for watering your garden but check that this is legal in your area. Channel run-off water to areas that need it most. Use your garbage disposal sparingly by composting your vegetable food waste and coffee grounds. Leave lower branches on trees and shrubs and allow leaf litter to accumulate and act as mulch. This keeps the soil cooler and reduces evaporation. However, use good judgment with this as safety issues may dictate which branches must be removed, and diseased branches and leaves should always be disposed of properly.

You may have noticed many of the tips relate to watering your lawn. Proper lawn watering can save thousands of gallons of water annually, encourage a healthier lawn, and reduce many other costs related to maintaining your lawn.

These suggestions are quite literally the tip of the iceberg. There are hundreds of additional ways to conserve water in your home, yard, or business. Check with your local utility departments or county extension offices for more ways to conserve. Although many of us in Northeast Nebraska have experienced minor problems with water shortages, problems are definitely on the horizon. Let's take action now to be good stewards of this precious resource.



Lessons From the Flood

By Gary Zimmer , Curator of Gilman Park Arboretum in Pierce

Every once in a while we horticulturists face an event that “puts us in our place” and reminds us how little control we have over the landscape. These events aren’t necessarily all bad, and can be used as a learning experience. For me, these events usually involve my incessant “pushing” of the border between hardiness zones 4 and 5. I’ve had many successes with zone 5 plants – and also quite a few failures. But in the 2010 summer we dealt with a totally different challenge that I’m hoping will become a valuable learning experience.

June 2010, following several days of torrential rains, about a third of the 10+ acres comprising Gilman Park Arboretum was under 1-5 feet of water for six days. Of course, even after the flood waters receded, the soils remained saturated for several weeks. Since this portion of the arboretum is in a designated flood storage area, I have known all along this was a possibility and had taken that into consideration when selecting plants for the area. It has flooded many times over the years, but never more than two days at a time; and I found out that neither I nor the plants were prepared for flooding of this magnitude.

My first inclination, viewing the area after the waters receded, was to just cry. The area looked “totaled.” Fortunately I had learned from other natural events to simply leave it alone for awhile. The worst thing to do is to give up or start ripping things out.

Almost immediately I saw that this could be a great learning experience; that I could document what happened to help myself – and others – in future planning and planting. So even though I didn’t really have the time for it, I made the time and started documenting what was happening. As a result, I now feel comfortable making recommendations to others in similar circumstances. Some of these observations may even be valuable for homeowners selecting landscape plants for heavily or over-irrigated turfgrass lawns. If a tree or shrub could survive this flood, they should be able to handle just about any amount of irrigation they receive.

One of the unknowns from this experience is whether older plants would have fared better. Many of the trees and



shrubs that were killed were relatively young, small plants; older, more established, plants may have survived. Still, for what it’s worth, there are three broad generalizations I would make about landscape plants for flood-prone areas:

1. Don’t plant viburnums. I don’t like saying that because I love viburnums, but they just don’t seem to be able to handle extreme wet situations. Few of our viburnums survived and some that did are still, more than a year later, recovering from severe damage. However, there was one very dramatic exception to this warning and for me this was the most amazing revelation from the flood. Despite all the destruction in our viburnum collection, a pair of *Viburnum dentatum* ‘Blue Muffin’ shrubs, with 4 of their 5 feet of growth submerged in floodwater, never lost one leaf. I was, and still am, simply amazed. That’s one tough plant! Another exception is *Viburnum sieboldii* ‘Wavecrest’. This 3-foot plant looked totally dead but, within a couple weeks, it came back with a vengeance from basal shoots and looks better today than it did before the flood.
2. Do plant dogwoods. On a few of them, lower limbs needed to be removed, but virtually all the dogwoods survived.
3. No surprise here, but don’t plant evergreens. Any evergreen. The only evergreen that survived the summer, *Abies nordmanniana*, was totally dead this spring. And *Picea mariana* supposedly tolerates flooding, but all five of our 6-9’ black spruce were killed outright.



As I mentioned earlier, I kept detailed records of everything that happened in the ensuing days, weeks and months. The damage was put into nine different categories, ranging from “killed outright” to “no damage at all.” Some plants looked good immediately after the waters receded, but died within two months. Some lived the rest of the year, but were dead this spring. Many lost everything below the waterline, but remained healthy above. Some had total dieback, but later began recovery from basal shoots.

(Continued on page 6)



Christmas Tree Tips

By Karen Zierke , Pierce County Master Gardener

I found this Christmas tree hint in *Acres Magazine*, and thought it worthy of sharing.

1. Always make a fresh cut of the trunk before putting the tree in water, even if the tree had only recently been cut.
2. Put the tree in lukewarm water for two days only.
3. Then put enough moisture absorbing beads in the water so when they are saturated, they completely fill the container and are tight around the tree trunk.

I personally have not tried this so encourage someone to try this as an experiment to see if the moisture absorbing beads work. However, step one is necessary in whatever you use—water only or the moisture absorbing beads.

During the long winter of 2011, I spent many hours looking through my favorite garden catalogs. The availability of beautiful, colorful and unusual varieties of vegetables was very intriguing and I had a hard time keeping my ordering lists reasonable. I use organic gardening methods with many heirloom varieties and love to try new plants each year. This spring when my seeds were started either indoors or direct seeding, I realized that the color purple would show its radiance in my 2011 vegetable garden.

Purple foods are colored by pigment called anthocyanin, a polyphenolic compound that has strong and protective antioxidant properties. Studies have shown many health benefits such as reducing cancer risk, improving memory, strong anti-inflammatory properties and assisting with healthy aging by including foods with deep dark color. Purple fruits and vegetables are packed with flavonoids which are known to be one of the most powerful phytochemicals. Flavonoids are heart-healthy and can assist in lowering risk of heart disease.

Here is a list of the seeds I tried this year and the company name. Some seeds were started indoors in late winter. Seed starting can be a challenge and I am learning more each year on how to be successful. I hope to obtain a starter greenhouse and small hoop house to help that process next year.



Arrangement by Jane Rhebb

Lettuce *Flame* organic Burpee Seeds Vibrant crimson-red leaves, great sweet flavor

Pac Choi *Violetta* Park Seeds Great stir-fried with olive oil

Radish *Purple Plum* organic Burpee Went to seed without forming radish

Cabbage *Red Express* organic Burpee Small heads with good color and flavor

Kohlrabi *Azur Star* Park Seed Pretty plant, good flavor, likes cool weather

Kale *Red Winter* Botanical Interests Very nutritious food, great stir-fried

Bush Bean *Velour French Filet* Johnny's Select Seeds Loved this, will plant next year

Bush Bean *Dragon Tongue* Baker Creek Heirloom Yellow pods with purple streaks

Eggplant *Listada De Gandia* Baker Creek Beautiful and tasty, popular in Italy

White with bright purple stripes

Tomato *Chocolate Cherry* Gurney's Rich, tangy flavor, 1 ½ inch fruits

Tomato *Cherokee Purple* Park Seed Our best discovery, this heirloom is delicious!

Pepper *Purple Beauty* Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds Stunning royal purple, good flavor

Currently we are harvesting Aronia berries on our acreage. Aronia berries have an intense dark purple color and is the leader among other fruits and berries with the highest content of anthocyanins and total polyphenols. The exciting new information and health studies on Aronia are worthy of another article.

We really enjoy our productive organic garden and save money on eating with the seasons. Trying new varieties and collecting new recipes has become a healthy hobby for my husband, Ron and I. Promoting gardening and nutritious foods to families is an important mission for us.

I am still waiting for more of my peppers to mature to try this recipe. I have purple, brown, orange, red and yellow peppers.
Jane

Marinated Roasted Peppers

Serves 6-8

- 6 bell peppers of any color
- 2 TBSP extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 TBSP fresh lemon juice
- 2 TBSP chopped fresh basil
- Salt and pepper

Preheat the broiler. Lightly grease a baking sheet with oil.
Use your outdoor grill if you like.

Place peppers on baking sheet or vegetable grilling pan with space between each one. It will take 10 to 20 minutes for the peppers to become charred all over as you turn them several times. Place the charred peppers in a covered bowl or plastic bag to steam for 10 minutes to loosen skins.

Slit the peppers and reserve the juice that runs from them. Peel the skins and scrape and discard the seeds. Cut the peppers into matchsticks.

Add the pepper juices to a bowl. Add the oil, lemon juice, basil, and salt and pepper to taste. Allow to stand at least 30 minutes before serving. Will keep for 7 to 10 days refrigerated. Use peppers as appetizer with cheese, on sandwiches, in salads---be creative!

As summer turns into fall, gardens still need some attention. Fall clean up is essential to prepare your home's landscape and vegetable garden for winter and next year's growing season.

Ornamentals. In the flower garden, cut or pull out perennials or annuals that are diseased or dying. Make sure plants are watered throughout the fall, so they are well hydrated going into the winter months. Generally, perennials required one inch of rain or irrigation per week.

Once the leaves of herbaceous perennials (plants that die back to the ground each year) have been killed by a hard freeze, their stems can be cut to ground level. One exception to this is chrysanthemums, which survive winter better if their stems are allowed to remain in place until spring.

Perennials damaged or killed during the winter usually are injured indirectly by frost heaving. Frost heaving occurs when the soil alternately freezes and thaws, resulting in damage to the plant's dormant crown and root system.

Frost heaving can be reduced by applying winter mulch, which helps prevent rapidly fluctuating soil temperatures. Any perennials that are not winter hardy should be mulched after the ground

freezes, usually in late November. A mulch layer about 3 inches thick is best.

Evergreen boughs, clean straw or other loose, coarse materials are good mulches. Materials such as tree leaves or grass clippings may compact too much around the plant, inhibiting water drainage and promoting disease development. All new perennials planted this summer would benefit from an application of mulch.

Vegetable gardens. To clean up a vegetable garden, pull out plants that are done for the year and add them to a compost pile. Rake up any unused fruits and vegetables, including dried up "mummies," and put them in a compost pile or bury them. Sanitation is important because many insects overwinter in dead plant material.

Put diseased plants in the trash, instead of the compost pile. Plant diseases may overwinter on infected plant debris if diseased plants aren't properly disposed. Most plant disease organisms and weed seeds are destroyed during the composting process when temperatures in the center of the pile reach 140 to 150 Fahrenheit, which can be measured using a soil thermometer. However, it is hard to mix a compost pile efficiently enough to bring all wastes to the center, so incor-

porating many weeds with seeds or diseased plants into your compost pile may create problems for next year's garden.

Roots, leaves and stems from healthy plants are a valuable source of organic matter because they will break down to improve the texture of garden soil. Plants that have not had pest problems can be cut up and put in the compost pile or turned into the soil for added organic matter. Organic mulches, such as straw or grass clippings, can also be tilled into the soil.

Tree leaves also are another excellent source of organic matter for the vegetable garden. After raking the leaves, scatter them over the vegetable garden and till them in. You can also use a mower to remove leaves from the lawn and then add them to the vegetable garden. Since mowing chops the leaves into smaller pieces, they will break down faster once added to the soil.



Lessons From the Flood

(Continued from page 4)



Still others lost most of their foliage, but put out new buds on existing wood. It was truly amazing to watch the differences in reaction to the flood.

There were many surprises for me – both positive and negative.

Some notable "good" surprises were the lack of damage on things like 'Blue Muffin' viburnum mentioned earlier, wisteria, *Cercidiphyllum*, redbud, magnolia and witchhazel. Negative surprises involved the many maples and larches that died, which I thought would handle flooding better. And of course there were trees that are supposed to be hardy and proved to be so – oaks, birches, hickories, buckeyes, and bald cypress – all of which I would recommend for flood-prone areas and even heavily irrigated lawns.

I also documented damage to perennials, and again there was a wide range of response. Two perennial gardens were totally under water for six days. I was resigned to them being total losses but there were surprises here, too. The "Wet Mesic Garden" was specifically designed to handle flooding, and there were some disappointments. *Lobelia*, *Eupatorium* 'Prairie Jewel', *Chelone* and *Ligularia* were all killed when others survived with little or no damage.

The perennial bed at the arboretum entrance was almost

entirely wiped out though surprisingly all the ornamental grasses survived: *Molinia*, *Miscanthus*, sedges and even little bluestem. I was able to "make lemonade from lemons" with this garden, though, and hopefully this can be an inspiration for others in similar situations. The area had turned into one big weed patch and I was hesitant to replant anything since flooding may recur, but then I looked closer and it hit me...I don't have to plant anything! Amid all the weeds were scores of little quaking aspen trees expanding from the colony at the back of the garden. It was a poor site for a perennial garden anyway and the aspen colony is an arboretum favorite for many people. What a golden opportunity to let the colony expand right up to the entrance structure! I did some cleanup and I'm anxious to see what it will look like five years from now. Gilman Park Arboretum will never be quite the same again, and in some ways that's alright. Maybe, with the lessons learned, it will be even better someday.

For more specific documentation from the flooding at Gilman Park Arboretum, go to <http://arboretum.unl.edu/plantinfo.html> or email Gary Zimmer at gilman@ptcnet.net.

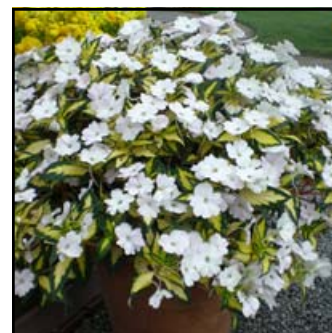




2011 American Garden Award Winners

<http://www.americangardenaward.org/>

#1—'SunPatiens® Variegated Spreading White'
An Impatiens for the sun: 'SunPatiens® Variegated Spreading White!' Surprisingly, it also performs well in shade and cool climates, surviving until the first hard frost, making it a three-season favorite. The large white flowers and striking variegated foliage make it an ideal plant in the "night garden."



#2—Dahlia 'Dahlinova Hypnotica® Lavender'
'Dahlinova Hypnotica® Lavender' is a beautifully strong plant with an amazing and striking flower color. This plant flowers over and over again. In a partly sun environment, the 'Dahlinova Hypnotica® Lavender' will offer you its amazing beauty all summer long!

#3—Petunia 'Easy Wave™ Neon Rose'

Grow 'Easy Wave™ Neon Rose' in sunny containers, landscape beds, or just about anyplace you want to make a bold impression! These fast-growing spreading petunias bloom continuously all season without cutting or dead-heading, and tolerate both hot and cool conditions very well. 'Easy Wave™ Neon Rose' offers vivid, eye-catching color!

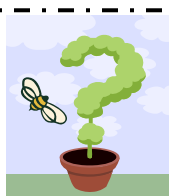


What is AGA?

The American Garden Award is a unique opportunity for the gardening public to vote on a specific flower 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 in this competition. Then, in cooperation with over 24 highly respected public gardens throughout the United States, we present the entries so consumers can view the plants in person, then vote on their favorite. For those consumers and home gardeners who are unable to make it to view these flowers in person, they are allowed to vote on the AGA website.

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 November 30 to be included in January's *The Green Patch* publication.

Northeast Nebraska Master Gardeners

Meetings held at:
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Master Gardeners are people who love plants,
gardening, landscaping, and teaching others.



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We're on the web at

<http://madison.unl.edu/mastergardenerhome>

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? 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.

Unfortunately no one was venturesome enough to guess what last quarter's insect was. It was leaf-petiole gall. These galls are formed by aphids. The cycle for them starts in the fall when an aphid lays an egg by the bud. The egg will hatch the next spring after the bud has produced a leaf. Before the leaf is fully-grown the newly hatched aphid begins feeding on the leaf petiole. By feeding on the leaf petiole the aphid induces the petiole to grow abnormally around the aphid forming a gall. The aphid reproduces asexually inside the gall. Eventually the aphids will leave the gall for another plant and then another generation will return in the fall to lay eggs.



What is this insect???

This quarter's insect was a photograph I received from the Wayne County Extension Office in Wayne, NE. These were found in the garden soil while the gardener was digging potatoes.

What kind of insect are these two? Be as specific as you can.

If you think you know, you can give me a call at (402) 370-4040 or shoot me an email wohnesorg2@unl.edu.

