



## Newsletter May 2023

### Seed Stock Update

You may notice this month that some of the seeds that would have needed to be started in March or April are no longer being restocked this year, such as tomatoes, peppers and eggplant. Our plan is to continue to stock seeds as long as they can be planted in time to get a harvest for this season. For things with a very short time from planting to harvest, such as radishes, we are hoping to have a continuous supply right up until September!

With that being said, we are having another seed packing event! June 13th from 5:30 - 7:30 pm at the Central library. No sign up necessary. We have lots of seeds that still can be packaged for this season. Hope to see you there!

### Seed Steward Training

Our Seed Steward Training program is taking shape. The training will be provided by the Northeastern Wisconsin Master Gardeners. Participants will have three videos to watch and one in person seed harvesting event to attend. The first two videos are complete and posted here: <https://newmastergardeners.org/seedsaving/> The third video is being finalized and will be posted when complete. The in person harvesting events will be posted a week or 2 before they are going to happen, both on the [website](#) and on the [facebook](#) page for the NEW Master Gardeners.

While we take donations from everyone, we are hoping to stock the core seeds with the efforts of trained Seed Stewards. Join us in learning this skill by signing up here: [Grow With Us](#).

### Calendar of Local Garden Related Events:

May 3, noon-1 pm (free)

Understanding Your Garden Soil  
Virtual

[Mini Webinars for Gardeners](#)

May 4, 6:30pm-8pm (\$)   
Uses of Native Plants: Wisconsin Roots  
Green Bay Botanical Garden

<https://www.gbbg.org/events/native-plants-wisconsin-roots/>

May 5-7 Garden Blitz (\$)

<https://newleaffoods.org/garden-blitz>

May 9, noon-12:45 pm (free)

Bee Lawns: Using your Lawn to Provide Food for Pollinators  
Virtual

[Mini Webinars for Gardeners](#)

May 10, Estimated Last Frost date for Green Bay!

May 11 & 12, 9-5. May 13 th, 9-2 (\$)

[NEWMGA Plant Sale](#)

STEM Center on UWGB Campus

May 12, 9am - 8pm (free)

Opening of the new Bell Children's Garden  
Green Bay Botanical Garden

<https://www.gbbg.org/support/childrens-garden-expansion-project/>

May 15th 6:00pm - 7:30pm (free)

Food Forest Guide: For planning, planting and  
maintaining your perennial food plants.

Virtual

[Food Forest class registration](#)

May 16, 6:30pm - 7:45pm (free)

Planning & Planting for Seed Saving with Bevin Cohen  
Central Library

[Seed Saving](#)

June 6, noon-1pm (free)

Gardening for Pollinators

Virtual

[Mini Webinars for Gardeners](#)

June 10, 10:00am - noon (free)

Summer Reading Kickoff at Brown Co Central Library  
(Master Gardeners available to hand out

1S1C envelopes and answer questions)

June 13, 5:30pm - 7:30pm (free)  
Seed Packing at Central Library

June 19-25  
[National Pollinator week!](#)

June 20: 6pm - 7:30pm (free)  
Evenings in the Library's Edible Garden  
Central Library

June 27: 6pm - 7:30pm (free)  
Evenings in the Library's Edible Garden  
Central Library

Tuesday, June 27, 6:30-7:45 pm (free)  
Aromatic Herbs: Growing, Cooking and Sachet-making  
Central Library

## One Seed, One Community

Watch this video to learn about the [One Seed, One Community Project](#).

Have you marked June 1 on your calendar? That date is coming fast and you need to consider where you are going to plant your Dragon Tongue Beans. Since this variety of bean is a bush type, it can be planted almost anywhere. It doesn't need to be trellised, and the roots of beans are somewhat shallow. It is a great seed for container gardening.

Once June 1 arrives, it is time to plant bean seeds in Brown County. To help soften the seed cover, soak the seeds in a glass of water the night before you plan to plant. Beans are planted 4 inches apart about 1 inch deep. Large seeds are perfect for children to plant. Have the child place the seeds on top of the soil using a ruler to help them measure 4 inches. On the child's pointer finger using a marker, make a dash 1 inch up from their finger tip. The child now pushes the seed into the soil stopping when the soil matches the mark on their finger. Immediately give your seeds a drink of water, and keep the soil moist for the next 7 to 14 days. NOTE: If you are planting in heavy soil like clay, plant your seeds 1/2 inch deep. If after two weeks, nothing is coming up, don't despair. Visit the seed library and get another package of seeds. These beans mature in 90 days. You should be able to plant up until the end of June and still get a productive harvest before frost.

We would love to hear about your successes or failures as you plant these bean seeds. You can send us photos to share your One Seed, One Community Dragon Tongue Bean experience. The email to contact us is, [seedsaver@newmastergardeners](mailto:seedsaver@newmastergardeners) or you can reach us on the contact page of our website, [www.newmastergardeners.org](http://www.newmastergardeners.org). There will be a "Return of the Dragon Tongue Bean" celebration this fall at the Brown County Library. More information will follow.

Join in this national movement to help relearn our heritage of seed saving. "Alone, we can do so little, together, we can do so much." ~Helen Keller

Submitted by Peggy, Northeastern Wisconsin Master Gardener

## Succession Planting

Succession planting is generally defined as seeding crops or planting seedlings at regular intervals during the growing season in order to have a consistent supply of that crop available for harvesting. For example, you can plant a few lettuce plants every week so that you have a continuous supply of lettuce.

Succession planting also encompasses planting new crops in the same soil after one crop is done during the growing season. This is hugely helpful in small spaces. For example, you can plant french breakfast radish on May 1 to be harvested around the end of May. Once harvested, you can put a warm season crop, such as tomato or bean, in that same spot. This helps you make the most of the time and space available to you.

University of Minnesota Extension has a great article about succession planting here if you would like to learn more.

<https://extension.umn.edu/yard-and-garden-news/succession-planting>

Submitted by Melissa, NEW Master Gardener

## Seed Saving Tips

If you have been following seed saving tips in the last few newsletters, you will know that opened pollinated and self-pollinated crops are the easiest types of seeds to start saving. This article will discuss plant population for backyard gardeners; both the size problem we encounter and how we can solve the issue.

**Why does plant population matter?** As seeds are grown out each year, they adapt to varying environmental conditions. For good genetic diversity in our seeds, we need to be thoughtful of the population size we are harvesting. If we save seeds from only one plant, and it does not have the genetic diversity to fight off a particular disease, then the plants we grow out the following year from these seeds would be susceptible to

that disease. Collecting seeds from lots of plants helps maintain genetic differences within the same variety. Depending on the resource, this could be anywhere from ten to two hundred plants. Yikes! My backyard garden is too small. That's why saving seeds as a community is so important.

**How can we overcome the problem?** Saving seeds collectively within our community will help us maintain genetic preservation and avoid inbreeding depression. If you collect seeds from five plants, and the neighbor down the street collects seeds from five plants, and the person across town collects from five plants and you all donate seeds to the library, we now have seeds from fifteen different plants. Problem solved! Or not? It will all depend on you. To make this happen we need you, community members, to donate seeds to the Brown County Seed Library. No matter how many seeds you donate, they will collectively help our seed collection become genetically stronger. This [seed saving guide](#) gives detailed information.

No matter what size garden you have, you can be an active donor in the seed library. Harvest some of your produce to eat, and leave some produce mature to seed harvesting conditions. Last year I left peas on the backside of my trellis to continue to grow until brown and dry, while picking and eating the pods on the frontside of the plants. By doing that, this year I have enough seeds to plant this spring, with extras to share. Consider becoming a seeds saver. It really can be that easy!

Click [here](#) if you are interested in becoming a Seed Steward for Brown County. Go to our [website](#) for more information on how to save seeds.

Submitted by Peggy, Northeastern Wisconsin Master Gardener

*"Everyone can be great, because everyone can serve." ~Martin Luther King, Jr.*

## The Living Soil Handbook: Part 3 Mulch

Last month we talked about compost and its role in stewarding living soil. This month I would like to focus on mulch; its benefits for the soil microbiome, different types of mulch and the advantages and drawbacks they offer as set forth in Jesse Frost's book "The Living Soil Handbook."

Mulches:

- "Help retain moisture by shielding the soil from wind and sunlight
- Distribute that moisture more evenly throughout the soil
- Provide habitat for beneficial organisms, both macro and micro- especially fungi
- Act as fodder for certain microbes called saprophytes that digest these carbonaceous materials and slowly release the mulch's nutrients in forms that plant roots can absorb

- Armor the soil against the impact of raindrops or footsteps, helping to prevent compaction
- Limit the germination of unwanted seeds” page 71, The Living Soil Handbook

Mulches are basically materials that cover the soil. In nature, leaves or other dead or living vegetation naturally occur. In instances where there is a disturbance, such as a fire, grazing animals or plowing, bare soil will quickly become covered again by living plants. Often the quickest plants to cover bare soil are what we consider weeds. Within the top layer of soil, seeds lie dormant waiting for the right conditions to sprout. When you clear all vegetative cover from the soil and don't replace it with mulch, weed seeds are practically guaranteed to appear. But if the soil is kept covered in mulch, many seeds will continue to lie dormant.

Straw and hay are common mulch materials, but have a few important differences. Straw is the stalks of grain crops such as wheat or rye that have been harvested once the stalks are already dry. It is a byproduct of cereal grain production, so the grain has been removed. Hay is grain, other grass or legumes that are cut while green and allowed to dry. Both are often inexpensive, easy to find locally, and packaged with twine (eco-friendly). Both help keep the soil cool. Both are high in carbon, but hay has additional nutrients, which is why it is commonly used as animal feed. Seeds can be present in either straw or hay, depending on when and how the harvest was done. If your mulch has seeds, it may be best to wrap it in plastic for a few months to let the seeds germinate and then die, before you use it in your garden. Herbicide contamination can also be a concern, best practice is to ask the farmer you are purchasing from if they have used any. Spoiled hay, or hay that has partially rotted and can no longer be used to feed animals, is often available cheaply and many of the seeds in it have sprouted or lost viability. It can be a little more difficult to spread than fresh straw or hay.

Freshly cut hay, haylage and grass clippings are another option as mulch. They are very high in nutrients and typically do not have many weed seeds (depending of course on when you cut). Haylage is fresh hay that is fermented in an aerobic environment, like we would with sauerkraut. It is important to make sure that the plants were not sprayed with herbicides or insecticides. It is also important not to use more than a few inches of this type of mulch, as it can mat down and reduce moisture and oxygen reaching the soil. It also creates a lot of heat as it decomposes, which can burn tender young plants.

Cardboard is probably the most abundant source of free mulch around. As long as it is the brown cardboard printed with only black ink, it should not contain anything harmful for your garden. It is best to stay away from any glossy or waxed cardboard and anything with colored ink, as it may introduce unwanted chemicals. Also remember to remove the tape. Cardboard should be wet down thoroughly to start the

decomposition process, then covered with another type of mulch several inches thick. Cardboard is a great first layer for a multilayer or lasagna style mulching system.

Wood chips and bark mulch are another easy to source and relatively cheap mulch. Finding a source that you know does not use pesticides and/or herbicides can be a challenge. I have used the free wood chips from the Bellevue Yard Waste site with no obvious problems, but you have no control over the type or amount of pesticide/herbicide contamination. Many stores sell it in bags, or by the truckload. There is also a website called [CHIPDROP](#) that will deliver free wood chip mulch from local arborists doing tree trimming and removal. Wood chips are not typically used in annual garden beds as mulch, since they can tie up the available nitrogen and the woody pieces can end up getting mixed in with leafy crops, such as lettuce, when harvested. If they are used, they are often mixed with a more nitrogen rich mulch to form a composting mulch. They are great for garden paths as long as the design of the path prevents them from getting washed away in heavy rains.

Leaves or leaf mold (decomposed leaves) are wonderfully nutrient rich, and should be used in the garden when they are available to you. They can contain herbicides/pesticides but typically have a smaller concentration than other mulches. Fresh leaves can form mats if used as is, it is typically advised to shred them before using them as mulch.

Cover crops, or living mulch have a distinct difference from other mulches: In addition to covering above the soil, the living roots are working below the soil surface to help with soil structure, improving the health of the soil microbiome and sequestering carbon. Some cover crops are left in place to die over winter, others are terminated using tools such as a crimper. This bends the stalks and prevents the plants from transporting water and nutrients. So the plant dies but all the plant material stays in place. Cover crops can be cereals (such as rye, wheat or barley), legumes (alfalfa or clover), brassicas (radishes or mustards) and non-legume broadleaves (flax and buckwheat). Each type of cover crop has different considerations, depending on what you want it to do for your soil and how long/tall you want to let it grow.

Finally, there are synthetic mulches such as landscape fabric and plastic sheeting. They still can help retain moisture, warm the soil and block weeds but they do not contribute any organic matter to the soil. They are also expensive and need to be replaced frequently, and are not environmentally friendly.

There is not one right type of mulch. Important considerations include possible pesticide contamination, what that mulch will bring to your ecosystem, availability and cost. Experiment with what you have available to find ones that work best in your garden. I like finding local farmers on Facebook marketplace or Craigslist to purchase mulch from, as we have a lot of farms here in NE Wisconsin. The most important thing to remember is to keep your soil covered as much as possible.

Submitted by Melissa, NEW Master Gardener

## Featured Local Organization

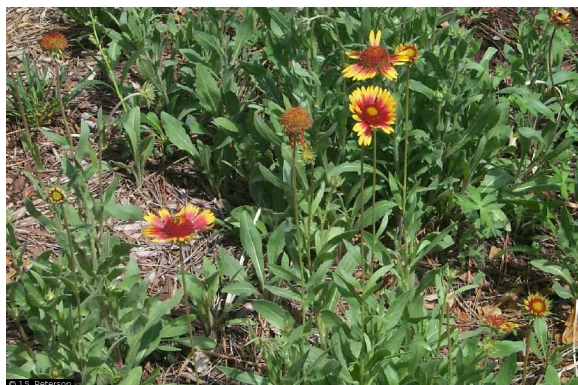
This month we are featuring [The Gardeners Club of Green Bay](#), which was begun in 1967. It is a part of the national organization [The Gardeners of America](#). This club aims to educate its members and the public on horticulture and to encourage and promote pride in individual or private gardens, community plantings, and parks. Their monthly meetings are used as educational opportunities, and anyone is welcome to attend. Here is a message from the Co-Presidents of The Gardeners Club of Green Bay:

*Come join us! No experience necessary—just a sincere interest in learning how to be better stewards of our beautiful home—“Earth”—through gardening! We have monthly meetings with educational speakers and fun garden-related workshops (in winter at the Green Bay Botanical Garden). In summer we tour private gardens. We also have informative monthly e-newsletters. We support civic projects of members’ choice—according to your own abilities, time, and interest. We have garden-related fundraisers to support our civic projects and to reimburse our educational speakers. We meet new people and build camaraderie—exploring and learning from each other’s interests and expertise.*

The Gardeners Club of Green Bay will be having their [first annual plant sale](#) May 19th & 20th, with garden tool sharpening offered May 19th.

They will also be offering a [Garden Walk](#) on July 22 from 9am - 3 pm, with 5 gardens to tour in the Suamico, Seymour and Howard Areas. The cost is \$15 per person or \$25 for two, children over 10 welcome. No pets please. Wristbands available the day of the event. Check their [website](#) for details.

## Plant Profile



### **Gaillardia**

*Common name, Blanket Flower*

If you like the style of the common weedlike Oxeye Daisy, let me introduce you to a member of the Aster family, a colorful native flower. *Gaillardia aristata* Pursh is a native of Wisconsin. It is the state flower of Oklahoma, but according to the USDA Plant Database, it is native to all of the contiguous

United States. This showcase flower is not only easy to grow in well drained soil and a sunny location, but it is very drought tolerant. To spoil your plant, you can give it a drink weekly in dry spells. This wheel of red with yellow-tipped petals blooms from



late spring through fall. This flower is an easy sell and seeds for the Gaillardia, as well as other native plants, can be found at the Seed Library located on the second floor of the Brown County Central Library.

Photo from USDA Plant Database <https://plants.usda.gov/home/plantProfile?symbol=GAAR>

Submitted by Peggy, Northeastern Wisconsin Master Gardener

## Featured Recipe

### SPRING THING PASTA

adapted from Forks Over Knives  
recipe by Del Sroufe

1 pound whole grain penne pasta  
1 bunch green onions, white and green parts thinly sliced  
1 pound asparagus, trimmed and cut in 1 inch pieces  
3 cloves garlic, pressed  
2 cups fresh or frozen green peas  
1 cup vegetable broth OR reserved pasta water  
1-2 tablespoons lemon zest  
1 tablespoon lemon juice  
1 cup chopped mixed herbs; such as parsley, chives, tarragon, dill  
1/2-1 teaspoon of crushed red pepper flakes  
1 cup arugula or spinach  
1/4 cup pine nuts, toasted  
Salt and pepper to taste



1. Boil pasta in salted water to Al dente stage, according to package directions. Drain, reserving 1 cup of pasta water.
2. While pasta cooks, sauté green onions, asparagus pieces, garlic, salt and pepper for about 3-4 minutes.
3. Stir in peas and cook for 2 minutes.
4. Add the drained pasta to the vegetables along with reserved pasta water OR vegetable broth. Heat through, about 2 minutes.
5. Stir in arugula, lemon zest and juice, mixed herbs, and toasted pine nuts.

6. Season to taste with salt and pepper, serve hot. May sprinkle with fresh Parmesan, if desired.

Note: Best if vegetables are crisp/tender so have all your fresh vegetables and herbs cut and ready to go before you start cooking.

Submitted by Terri, NEW Master Gardener

## Native Plants Help Fruits and Vegetables Thrive

Since National Pollinator Week is coming up, June 19-25, we are passing on the following [article](#) and chart from [Missouri Prairie Foundation](#). While GrowNative is a Missouri based organization, the information and most native plants listed in the attached chart are available and appropriate for Wisconsin vegetable gardens too!

### *Native Plants Help Fruits and Vegetables Thrive*

*Did you know native companion plants facilitate pollination of fruits and vegetables?*

- *We depend on pollinators for most of the vegetables and fruits we enjoy from farms and our own gardens. By transferring pollen among the flowers of the same species of fruits and vegetables, fertilization occurs and makes fruit and seed development possible.*
- *Non-native honeybees are important pollinators of many of our food crops, but numerous species of native bees and other pollinating insects are significant as well. In fact, many native bees—of a variety sizes and shapes—are the only insects that pollinate certain species. For example, squash bees are vital for squash flower pollination.*
- *Native bees need not only nectar and pollen from fruit and vegetable flowers, but also from many native flowers. You can help support native bees and other pollinators by planting a variety of native wildflowers and native flowering shrubs and trees, including ones listed here.*
- *Sustaining and increasing native bee populations with native plants helps ensure there are plenty of pollinators for the fruits and vegetables you grow!*

GARDEN PLANT	NATIVE POLLINATORS	NATIVE COMPANION PLANTS
<b>strawberries</b>	<b>small-medium sized bees</b> <i>Augochlorella, Augochlora, Lasioglossum, Halictus, Osmia, Ceratina, Andrena</i>	New Jersey tea, ragworts ( <i>Packera</i> spp.), <i>Phacelia</i> spp., pale beard-tongue, wild hyacinth, common cinquefoil, golden alexanders
<b>blackberries and raspberries</b>	<b>small-medium-large bees</b> <i>Andrena, Halictus, Lasioglossum, Augochlorella, Augochlora, Hoplitis, Osmia, Ceratina</i> , bumblebees	New Jersey tea, indigo bush, hawthorns, wild hyacinth, Jacob's Ladder, pale beard-tongue
<b>blueberries</b>	<b>medium-large bees</b> <i>Andrena</i> , bumblebees, <i>Colletes, Augochlora, Augochloropsis, Lasioglossum, Osmia, Habropoda, Eucera, Anthophora</i>	redbud, plums, blue star, blue-eyed Mary, wood betony, Virginia bluebells, wild hyacinth, wild geranium, horsemint
<b>apples, peaches, pears, and plums</b>	<b>medium-large bees</b> <i>Andrena, Colletes, Halictus, Lasioglossum, Augochlora, Augochlorella</i>	major attractions on their own because of their size and conspicuousness
<b>tomatoes</b>	<b>medium-large bees</b> bumblebees, <i>Augochloropsis, Lasioglossum, Anthophora</i>	foxglove beardtongue, pale purple coneflower, blue wild indigo, wild bergamot, purple prairie clover, germander, leadplant, tall coreopsis, obedient plant
<b>peppers</b>	<b>medium-large bees</b> <i>Halictus, Agapostemon, Augochlora, Augochlorella, Melissodes bimaculatus</i> , bumblebees	same as tomatoes (above)
<b>eggplant</b>	<b>medium-large bees</b> bumblebees, <i>Augochloropsis, Lasioglossum</i>	same as tomatoes (above)
<b>green beans</b>	<b>medium-large bees</b> <i>Megachile</i> , bumblebees	leadplant, purple prairie clover, butterfly milkweed, common milkweed, germander, prairie blazing star, wild bergamot
<b>squashes</b>	<b>large bees</b> squash bees ( <i>Peponapis, Xenoglossa</i> ), bumblebees, <i>Melissodes bimaculatus</i>	leadplant, purple prairie clover, germander, butterfly milkweed, common milkweed, wild bergamot, native thistles, sunflowers, tall coreopsis
<b>cucumbers</b>	<b>medium-large bees</b> <i>Halictus, Agapostemon, Augochlora, Augochlorella, Melissodes bimaculatus</i> , bumblebees	same as squashes
<b>zucchini and melons</b>	<b>medium-large bees</b> squash bees ( <i>Peponapis, Xenoglossa</i> ), bumblebees, <i>Melissodes bimaculatus</i>	same as squashes
<b>okra</b>	<b>medium-large bees</b> bumblebees, <i>Melissodes bimaculatus, Ptilothrix bombiformis</i>	ironweeds, prairie blazing star, woundwort, common milkweed, native thistles, sunflowers, tall coreopsis, native hibiscus

Thank you Annette from the Northeastern Wisconsin Master Gardeners for finding this information for us!

