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What’s Happening. . .

In our area

Meeker County Gardener’s Gala
Tuesday, March 15, 2016, 5 - 9 p.m.
Bernie Aaker Auditorium, 114 N Holcombe Ave, Litchfield, MN
For more info contact (320) 484-4303, wint0146@umn.edu

McLeod County Hort Day
Saturday, March 19, 8 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Crow River Golf Club, Hutchinson, MN
For more info contact (320) 484-4303, wint0146@umn.edu

Let’s Get Growing
Saturday, April 9, 8 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.
Alexandria, MN
For more info (320) 762-3890, tavei001@umn.edu

Lamberton Hort Day
Tuesday, April 6, 2015, Lamberton MN
For more info visit http://swroc.cfans.umn.edu/events-0

Please contact us if you are sponsoring a garden-related event as we would be happy to include your event in our calendar. Contact - lmcgraw@hutchtel.net

At the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum

Arboretum Photographers Society Show - February 1 - April 3

Timeless Beauty Orchid Display - Visitors Center
February 5 - March 6, 8 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

For more information on what’s happening at the Arboretum, please visit www.arboretum.umn.edu/exhibitsandevents.aspx

Anemone 'Honorine Jobert'

2016 Perennial Plant of the Year

Elegant, dazzling white flowers surround frilly yellow stamens with chartreuse centers. Two to three inch flowers adorn tall waving stems above an attractive mound of rich dark green leaves. 'Honorine Jobert' typically grows 3' to 4' tall - slightly more compact than others.

Width: Plant 20” apart
Bloom Time: Late Summer to Mid-Fall
Sun-Shade: Full Sun to Half Sun/Half Shade
Zones: 4 to 8
Wet Site Tolerant
Good For Cut Flowers
Attracts Butterflies
Deer Resistant
Rabbit Resistant
Beneficial For Bees

Source - Bluestone Perennials
www.bluestoneperennials.com/
Personal Size Squash

Sometimes large varieties of squash are too large and too much to eat. Well rejoice!!! There are several smaller sized squash now available in the marketplace.

Squash, Delicata

An heirloom squash that tastes like a sweet potato

Introduced in 1891, Delicata's taste is remarkably similar to that of sweet potatoes, but it's much easier to grow. The vines produce plentiful cream-colored, green-striped oblong fruits, about 3" in diameter and 6" long.

Days To Maturity - 80 to 100 days
Fruit Size - 3 to 8 inches
Full Sun
Spread - 2 to 4 feet
Height - 10 to 12 inches
Direct Sow

Delicata squash can be prepared like other types of squash or sliced and roasted with butter and maple syrup. No need to peel the squash as the shell is also edible.

Honeynut Butternut Squash

Delicious butternut flavor delivered in a slightly smaller package. Higher yielding than traditional butternut varieties, you'll harvest loads of personal sized squash from the 7 to 10 foot spreading vines. The 4 to 5 inch sweet and nutty fruits are a nice size that's more manageable to cut and prepare, too.

Days To Maturity - 85 days
Fruit Size - 4 to 5 inches
Full Sun
Spread - 7 to 10 feet
Direct Sow
Pest Alert! Fungus gnats resemble fruit flies, thrive in wet soil, and feed on plant roots and debris. Allow plants to dry out between waterings and keep soil clear of dead leaves and dropped flowers. If infested, remove plant from pot, wash all soil off the roots, and re-pot plant in fresh soil in a clean pot.

Valentine’s Day - Show your love by giving someone a vibrant plant or cut flowers. Orchids, anthurium, cyclamen, roses, freesia, begonias, azaleas, and fragrant gardenias are a few of the many choices available through your local florist.

'Sun King' Golden Japanese Spikenard

Debbie Lonnee, in a recent article in the *Northern Gardener* magazine, touted the merits of this delightful specimen. She said she has grown ‘Sun King’ in her garden for the past four years and is excited about its potential.

‘Sun King’ is a fast-growing, big plant. When mature it can easily reach a height and spread of 4 feet by 4 feet. The foliage is compound and very large, making ‘Sun King’ a bold, colorful specimen in the garden. The foliage is resistant to deer browsing and she said she had observed no major pest or disease problems.

Debbie has grown ‘Sun King’ in both full sun and part shade. If the plant is in full sun, it needs to have adequate water throughout the growing season. With that in mind, she stated she has success growing it in full sun. Additionally, the plant has nice shade tolerance but needs a few hours a day of sun to bring out the yellow tones in the foliage. ‘Sun King’ will grow in deeper shade, but the foliage will be more muted yellow to lime green. The plant remains yellow throughout the growing season with little or no fall color change. ‘Sun King’ is supposed to be hardy to Zone 3; however, Debbie suggests that if you choose to grow it and live in Zone 3 that you consider winter protection.

Aralia does bloom in mid to late summer with interesting racemes of tiny white flowers that are followed by inedible, deep purple to black berries. She has not observed a lot of blooming on her plants and suspect that may be due to our shorter seasons here in the North. Some garden catalogs classify this as self-sowing and invasive. However, if there are few to no flowers, berries which will self-sow won’t be an issue.

‘Sun King’ combines nicely with hosta and other shade-loving plants. She suggests using it as a background plant in the perennial garden where the bold foliage will contrast beautifully with more delicate plants such as ferns, astilbes, and ornamental grasses.

Kids & Gardens - Make a flower press out of two pieces of masonite, cardboard, and an old belt. Put a flower or leaf between two sheets of paper, then cardboard and the masonite. Tighten the belt around the stack. Check in a week. Glue the pressed flowers and leaves to paper to make a picture of a garden.

Rx for the Winter Blues: Doctor’s order is to visit an indoor garden like the Conservatory at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum. See (and smell!) gardenias, orchids, plumerias and other tropical plants. [http://www.arboretum.umn.edu/](http://www.arboretum.umn.edu/) or visit the Marjory McNeely Conservatory at Como Park.

Source: Minnesota Gardening 2016 Calendar and Minnesota Landscape Arboretum and University of Minnesota Extension
In the most recent 50th Anniversary edition of Southern Living magazine, their Grumpy garden columnist shared some wit, wisdom and words of warning collected over the last 50 years. Obviously, not all of their information is appropriate for our Northern climate, but some things are universal.

1. Don't **EVER** let anyone "top" your shade trees.

2. Never grow watermelons on the fifth floor balcony for obvious reasons.

9. Many plants wilt in hot sun, even if the soil is moist.

10. The most common reason plants fail to bloom is not enough sun.

11. Never take a chain saw with you into a tree unless you've **MADE OUT A WILL!**

13. Remember the best way to get even with someone who has slighted you - give them a flat of rampaging mint to plant in their garden.

15. Power company pruning crews are not artists.

17. The vast majority of garden plants like sun and well-drained soil.

18. Shade, like dying plants, is not so much of a problem as an opportunity.

19. The surest way to kill a plant is to make it the focal point of your garden.

20. It's easy to keep dogs from **DIGGING UP YOUR FLOWERS** - get rid of one or the other.

23. Fruiting veggies such as tomatoes, peppers, melons, and squash need full sun.

25. No kind of grass will grow in full shade.

26. Find out how big a tree or shrub will grow before you put it in the ground.

28. Forecasting the day of your last spring frost is easy, it always comes right after you set out your impatiens.

30. Avoid wetting the foliage when you water.

32. Never pile dirt over the exposed roots of a mature tree, especially an oak.

33. Beware of big trees that are hollow inside or have mushrooms growing on them.

36. The purpose of a kinked garden hose is to make you stop, take a look at the world around you, and waste precious time.

40. Find a new way to enjoy hydrangeas all winter long - spray paint the old, brown flowers blue or pink.

41. Answer smartly when a person asks what you think of their ugly yard. Try "That's really something!" or "I've never seen that before!" or "Who would have thought of that?"

42. Just because a plant is native doesn't mean it is better.

44. To keep birds from pecking holes in your ripe tomatoes, hang red Christmas balls on the vines, this drive them nuts!

48. Never allow your cat to drive your lawn tractor. - he's too short to see over the steering wheel and usually mows off the flowers.
Winter Windowsill Herb Garden

Stay warm indoors this winter while tending a windowsill herb garden. Growing herbs is a great way to exercise your green thumb without freezing it off in the garden. There are so many herbs that you can cultivate indoors, and also use in hearty winter recipes. Add a splash of fresh oregano to your spaghetti, or sprinkle a few sprigs of fresh thyme atop a slow-cooked pot roast with herbs harvested right from your windowsill.

When planning a windowsill garden, first think about which herbs you use the most in your cooking. Growing your own herbs is a great way to add fresh flavor to your food.

Some of the easiest herbs to grow include rosemary, scented geraniums, oregano, thyme, bay leaf, mint and chives. These herbs like well-drained soil and lots of indirect sunlight. Indoor air can become very dry in the winter, so think of a nice, humid place for your herbs like the kitchen or bathroom window. Prune and harvest often to keep these herbs producing. Herbs are functional and decorative, so utilize their aesthetic qualities to add life to your home during the cold, dreary months of winter.

Reprinted in part from http://pallensmith.com/

Thank you, Sandy!

Sadly we report the resignation of Sandy Wacek. Sandy has been a Renville County Master Gardener since 2003. She has been actively involved in the Master Gardener program here in Renville County and a dedicated helper in maintaining the gardens at the Renville County Fairgrounds. We sincerely thank her for her contribution and wish her the best as she moves on to other interests.

On a more upbeat note...

We have three new interns who are currently enrolled in the Master Gardener training program. They have a busy year ahead in that after completing the online training, they are required to each volunteer 50 hours to the program. We eagerly look forward to welcoming and working with:

Lindsey Caraway, Renville MN
Sandy Feldman, Renville MN
Alica Witmore, Echo MN

Meet the Renville County Master Gardeners

Jane Aalderks – Maynard; Louise Schweiss Anderson – Fairfax; Lindsey Caraway (Intern) - Renville, Joy Clobes - Fairfax; Sandy Feldman (Intern) - Renville, Cathi Fesenmaier – Olivia; Erin Grams – Hector; Ginger Hallbeck – Olivia; Susan Haubrich - Danube; Betsy Hennen – Olivia; Jan Howell - Olivia; Pam McColley - Franklin; Linda McGraw - Buffalo Lake, Connie Schmoll, Olivia, and Alica Whitmore (Intern) - Echo.

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