**Female Narrator:** [00:00:00] Welcome to the Lawn and Garden podcast with University of Wyoming Extension specialist Jeff Edwards, and co-host Jerry Erschabeck. Originally aired on KGOS and KERM in Torrington, join Jeff, Jerry, and their special guests as they talk all things gardening in Wyoming. Our Lawn and Garden podcast helps you improve your home garden or small acreage. [MUSIC]

**Jeff Edwards:** Good morning everybody. This is Jeff Edwards and Jerry Erschabeck at the KGOS/KERM Lawn and Garden program. We're happy to have you here today. Jerry, how are you doing?

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Really good. Thank you.

**Jeff Edwards:** Good to see you. And Joyce Evans is our guest today. She is the mayor of Fort Laramie, so we will have some interesting things to talk about today. But right now, we'll take a few moments and listen to our sponsors and be right back in a bit.

**Female Narrator:** [MUSIC] Starting May 18th, some University of Wyoming Extension offices will be open to the public. Contact your local office to learn about your county's variances for COVID-19 restrictions. Even if your county remains closed, you can always contact your local educator by phone or email. Go to wyoextension.org to find your county's contact information. [MUSIC]

**Male 1:** Hey folks, are you a first-time gardener and lacking a little bit in the green thumb area? The Cent$ible Nutrition Program and UW Extension are excited to share gardening resources and tips. Learn how to get started. Choose seeds and trees from Wyoming's climate and plan your landscape. Go to uwyocnp.org/garden for sensible gardening and food growing tips. Good luck and green thumbs.

**Jeff Edwards:** We're back. This is the KGOS/KERM Lawn and Garden program. Happy to have you here today. Joyce, it is good to have you in the studio with us today, and I think we're going to spend some time talking about things happening in Fort Laramie. Are you okay with that?

**Joyce Evans:** I'm okay with that. Thank you for having me on today. Yeah, we have a lot of exciting things in the gardening world happening in Fort Laramie

**Jeff Edwards:** Excellent. Do you have gardens planted? Do you have an effort by the city for…I think I've heard a rumor that you have an effort going into place for a community garden?

**Joyce Evans:** We do. We've had the idea for some time to do a community garden, but this year we decided to put it in place. Unfortunately, we decided before COVID struck. Our local preschool planted vegetable and flower plants, and had them started before they had to disband. Our preschool teacher, who also happens to be on the town council, Laura Curtsinger, kept those plants going. She borrowed some grow wagons, and had grow lights, and we have [00:03:00] grown a beautiful set of tomatoes and peppers, and also flowers for our park. For the community garden, we decided that we would start small this year. We got permission from the town council and through totally volunteer work, built a raised bed and then when the time was right, we thought, we planted those lovely plants from under the grow lights out into the harsh Wyoming sun and wind, and put them into our community garden.

**Jeff Edwards:** Wait a minute. [OVERLAPPING]

**Joyce Evans:** One of them is this year and it worked really well, I'll be replacing a few. Thank you very much. [LAUGHTER]

**Jeff Edwards:** It worked really well until it hailed, right? [LAUGHTER]

**Joyce Evans:** Well, we did manage to miss the hail, but the wind has done its part and there are a few really happy rabbits in this new place. But we are going to run it a little differently than we hoped to in the future. But this year, since the plants were started, we went ahead and put them in the garden, and we also planted a good amount of seeds. We have things like beets and lettuce, and kale and cucumbers, and all kinds of radishes, carrots, those kind of things are coming up. We planted those by seed.

**Jeff Edwards:** Joyce, [OVERLAPPING] how does your community garden work? I'm sorry to interrupt. In a lot of places, community gardens are managed by a whole bunch of different individuals growing for themselves. There are other places where community gardens are managed by one person and then folks can come in and harvest the food. How do you guys plan on managing yours?

**Joyce Evans:** Well, this year, because of the disruption and because of the way things worked out, we're going to do the latter way. We are going to go ahead and maintain the garden ourselves, and when anyone wants to come in, pull a few weeds, or harvest a tomato or pepper or anything else, they'll be welcome to do that. It's open to the public, we are trying to not allow people to congregate. We didn't have a big community planting, which we had planned to do. But this year, it will work that way. In the future, we're open to the concept of letting people have a portion of the raised bed or if we expand another raised bed, we're just going to see how this works out. If it goes in the community and becomes popular, then we can have plenty of room to expand. But right now, we're going to just let people come as they choose and harvest when they want to, whatever they want to. [OVERLAPPING] It's free for all.

**Jeff Edwards:** Ok, good. If you're allowing people to pull weeds, do you have signs with pictures on them that says weed, not weed? [LAUGHTER]

**Joyce Evans:** We have pictures of all of the plants. However, [LAUGHTER] they may not be in all stages of development, but I've never been overwhelmed with an army wanting to come in and pull weeds.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Now, my brother has that same idea that he does not want a garden for himself, but he says, [00:06:00] "I'll come and help you, whatever you want me to do, but can I have an acorn squash?" I said, "Sure." He says, "Can I have some tomatoes?" I said, "You bet." He's willing to do a little bit of sweat equity for some of his vegetables and produce.

**Joyce Evans:** That's encouraging to know that people are willing to do that. We do want to make the point that everything was donated to this, it didn't cost any city funds, we're not expecting town people to do the labor or anything. This is totally up to the community and volunteers. There's not a lot of sweat equity this year, but in the future there could be.

**Jeff Edwards:** There will be more sweat in the future. [LAUGHTER]

**Joyce Evans:** Yes, for sure. [LAUGHTER].

**Jeff Edwards:** There's one other bit of the garden that you might want to talk about that we can talk about together.

**Joyce Evans:** Okay. Why don't you bring that up?

**Jeff Edwards:** Laura Curtsinger contacted me earlier on in the year about the possibility of getting a geo-dome in Fort Laramie. And her geodesic dome, which would be a passive greenhouse garden type thing for folks to grow in. It'd be a protected space, much like a hoop house or a high tunnel, but we've started doing the geodesic domes in the last couple of years and they're much more sturdy than a regular traditional hoop house and are just as productive. So we thought it would be a good place to put one. Later, meaning September, we have on the calendar date a week to actually build the geodesic dome there in Fort Laramie.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Well, [OVERLAPPING] that's really cool. Joyce, where would you put that geodesic dome? In the park in the south side of Fort Laramie?

**Joyce Evans:** We're thinking of putting it near town hall because we [OVERLAPPING] now have a town hall and community center in the old school. We've moved into that building, and there's a lot of space that used to be the old yard around the school and lawn, and it hasn't been kept up for a long, long time, so it's an kind of eyesore and we have water to it. We are thinking, with permission of the town council, which we do not have at this point, we will have to speak with the council, but we're hoping to be able to put it up near the town hall. There's a lot of sun there, it's a great place and a lot of space, and it would be a very neat, clean, appropriate addition to that part of the town. [OVERLAPPING] That's what we're thinking right now.

**Jeff Edwards:** Okay.One of the things that I have been thinking about with these geodesic domes is, so you have protected space on the inside, you might as well build raised beds right around the outside of it as well. You can base inside and outside, very convenient to your gardening and just continue to build concentric circles out from the inside to build your raised beds and start your little farm right there.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Jeff, [OVERLAPPING] on the inside of your geodesic dome, [00:09:00] do you make a curved raised bed in there to start them? What's the interior like?

**Jeff Edwards:** The geodesic dome has 10 sides at the base. It'll be a 21 foot diameter dome. What we really need to do is recalculate the dome diameter and I think it's 18 feet in order for it to make it come out right, and just re-cut the wall sizes and only make nine of them, and then build it in. Then on the inside, you can also construct what they call a key garden, I don't know if you're familiar with that or not, Jerry. But it's almost round and it has one area where you walk into it so that you can get to the inside, and then it'll be another outside.

Think of it as a bullseye and a target, [OVERLAPPING] so you have these concentric rings of space. There'll be some on the outside of the wall and then another concentric ring in the inside that you can still get to and grow in. To me, that would make most sense of the space, and then the other option is then to build a concentric ring on the outside of the structure and you've got this inside-outside gardening space that's relatively compact and very productive.

**Joyce Evans:** I think a lot of vegetables in a small footprint, and I think that's a really good idea. We definitely want to keep a part of that dome for the preschool because that is the whole impetus of getting this going, the preschoolers. [OVERLAPPING] We want to keep a part of that for the preschool, but we were thinking about opening the rest of the community and having them either have spaces, or depending on how this outside garden works, maybe we would just have harvest. But we have a lot of concepts that we're playing with and wanting to get the one that works best for our community.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Yeah. You could even think about having chickens.

**Joyce Evans:** Briefly. [LAUGHTER]

**Jeff Edwards:** Yeah, I don't think that was a good idea, Jerry.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** [LAUGHTER] Not so much.

**Jeff Edwards:** [LAUGHTER] Well, that's fantastic. I think it'd be a great improvement for Fort Laramie and for the folks there and maybe a little bit of a morale booster and community garden, maybe community building. Everybody likes food, right?

**Joyce Evans:** Everybody does and so many people here are old time gardeners and have gardened their entire lives and remember gardens from their childhoods. It's a nice tie-in for folks that aren't able, don't have the space, or don't have a physical power anymore to do that, to be able to participate in that activity that was really important to them for their entire lives. So I think we'd like to make that possible. We do have another really exciting thing that's happening too. We're getting a farm wall, one of the vertical gardening projects. The Wyoming Business Council through the Main Street program, they had a place-making project and we're able to obtain [00:12:00] several farm walls that were given to the state at a reduced price, and they made those available to Goshen County Economic Development through the Main Street program. We were offered a farm wall for $300 and we immediately had enough donations to make that payment. This is a cool vertical wall that has the plants planted in it already and we just took it up. It has a watering system. It's actually coming planted this year because of the COVID, they felt that there wouldn't be time to get someone else to plant them. So they planted it, they will install it, and we're going to have that put on the community center. So it will be right there near the garden.

So eventually, our concept is to have herbs and maps so you can have your vegetables in the greenhouse and in the raised beds and then get your basil and your dale and all the things you wanted herb-wise from the vertical wall. But we'll see how that works. But we don't know what it's coming planted with and it should be installed in a couple of weeks. So we're pretty excited about that.

**Jeff Edwards:** That's very cool. I know that there's one on one of the south-facing walls in Laramie, on one of the businesses there. They harvest their greens and spices- herbs and those type off of it. So it's an interesting way to grow and produce, particularly if you don't have a lot of space.

**Joyce Evans:** It's novel enough that I think it will draw people to see how it works. I really love the educational component of it. It gives us a chance to get those little kids involved with what happens when you put a seed in the ground and to follow that process all the way through to when you have a tomato on your plate. I think that's really important. I know the schools do that, some. But I think it's okay to start at pre-school and that's one of the concepts that Laura has had in her pre-school, is to start plants and to show kids where their food comes from.

So I'm really excited about that. I'm also excited about that tying in intergenerational thing, where we have older people who want to be involved in gardening and little kids who want to be involved in gardening and getting that sense of community and that intergenerational gap closed a little bit. So I'm excited about those possibilities.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Joyce, that's almost a destination thing to come look at it. For some of us older kids, I too would want to see that. I'm wondering if it was going to be more hydroponically grown at a vertical wall or if there's going to actually be dirt involved?

**Jeff Edwards:** Soil.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Soil involved. Soil.

**Joyce Evans:** There may be some dirt too. Most gardening requires some dirt but-

**Jerry Erschabeck:** No, no. Soil.

**Joyce Evans:** I am anxious to see the actual process myself. I have not seen one up close and personally, but I'm sure we will become intimately involved with [00:15:00] the farm wall and we will know how it works. I do know it has a water system that has to be hooked up to water, so it takes care of itself fairly well, I think, but I know it will need to be monitored. So when I know more, I will let you know.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** All right.

**Jeff Edwards:** I've seen them but I'm not quite sure what the growth medium is.

**Joyce Evans:** Maybe there is some soil involved, but I'm not sure.

**Jeff Edwards:** Yeah. Well, we'll find out won't we?

**Joyce Evans:** We will find out hands-on. We're good at that.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** So Jeff, with the geodesic dome soils, that'll be all hand-picked and hand selected soils so you get the best premium kind of growing conditions?

**Jeff Edwards:** So that's going to be up to Laura, but I can speak personally about mine. I use my local soil and then put in about 25 percent compost and then continue to add compost to it. Well, each year add more compost to it because it compresses and that compost breaks down and those types of things. So it's a really good opportunity to create your own soil and then get it tested so you know what's there or not there, and use the amendments that you need in order to make it most productive.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** You bet. So in your geodesic dome, getting back to that, how deep are your beds?

**Jeff Edwards:** Well, their base wall is 18 inches, so you could go that high at least unless you wanted to make some modifications to it. I've done a geodesic dome in Wheatland where we used a four-foot base wall and those folks put in a three-foot tall raised bed. They're reporting that they have tomatoes over their heads now. [LAUGHTER]

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Indeterminant.

**Jeff Edwards:** Indeterminant, yes. You need to plant determinant tomatoes in a tall, raised bed. [LAUGHTER]

**Joyce Evans:** That's right. But we also need to be cognizant of ADA requirements. So if we have people who are in wheelchairs or need walkers and those types of things to make that access available. So I'm thinking 18 inches is a little bit low. Eighteen inches to two feet, I think, is the recommended height for comfort.

**Jeff Edwards:** We may have to make adjustments to yours.

**Joyce Evans:** We'll think about that and I'll check the specifications to make sure we're on track. But I think 18 inches is as low as you want to go.

**Jeff Edwards:** Well, and I think it's actually 16 inches, so we might be making adjustments to yours anyway.

**Joyce Evans:** Well, my back says that's real low.

**Jeff Edwards:** I agree. Yeah.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** If you have someone in a wheelchair, that might be an appropriate height. You might have to go like they do in some kitchens. They have different heights for different activities and so it might be one of those things that you might have different heights for different planting. As [00:18:00] the mayor, you need to be aware of a lot of things and I didn't even stop to think about ADA in that moment that we were talking about the geodesic dome.

**Jeff Edwards:** Well, and that's one of the things that we're aware of because of where we've been placing the hoop houses and high tunnels, the ADA requirements. So our doors that we put on are a little bit wider and we really have to watch if we are planting in the middle the space is available for people to get in and maneuver around easily.

**Joyce Evans:** I think those center beds could probably be higher than the outside beds. So that might be a possibility of just doing that and not adjusting the height of the beds on the outside.

**Jeff Edwards:** Right. So we've talked about domes and gardens. I want to talk about things growing right now. [LAUGHTER] We have I'm sorry to say, but I am starting to see puncture vine germinating. The dreaded puncture vine is showing up and it's one of those things that once it starts blooming, you will start having seeds in a matter of minutes. So be on the watch for puncture vine and try to be taking care of them. If those things are starting to germinate, it might be a little bit too late to put, not might, is, could be a little too late to put out some pre-emergent product. So you're going to need a broad leaf control product to try to get those things. Or if you don't want to use pesticides, hand removal, hoeing. Jerry's favorite, rototilling.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** No, you don't want to rototill. [OVERLAPPING]

**Joyce Evans:** Is he a recreational rototiller?

**Jerry Erschabeck:** My reputation is preceding me [OVERLAPPING].

**Jeff Edwards:** Jerry.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Yes.

**Jeff Edwards:** Yes, he is a recreational rototiller. [LAUGHTER]

**Jerry Erschabeck:** I would not rototill puncture vines. That mechanical removal does not include rototilling. You're just going to replant and replant, and those seeds last for 7-10 years or so.

**Jeff Edwards:** Or longer.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Or longer. [OVERLAPPING]

**Jeff Edwards:** Yeah. [LAUGHTER]. I think the half-life on puncture vine is like 15-20. They're are long lived seed.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Yeah.

**Jeff Edwards:** So you don't want to be sharing that legacy with your grandchildren as I keep telling you about other things. [LAUGHTER]

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Not so much.

**Joyce Evans:** That's true. But they do succumb to being pulled.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** So I had brought a peony with me that is blooming in my yard. I had to transplant a couple peony. I don't think that they like to be transplanted in this kind of weather, but I had to get them out of the way where they were at and Joyce, you said that you had some peony that was growing but not enough sun.

**Joyce Evans:** That's correct, and so mine need to be transplanted, but not this time of year. I agree.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** When do you think you’ll [00:21:00] transplant?

**Joyce Evans:** Either in the fall or in the early spring.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Yeah.

**Joyce Evans:** But I have transplanted them in the summertime and they have survived, but they have not been particularly happy peonies.

**Jeff Edwards:** [LAUGHTER] It takes several years for peonies to become happy I think.

**Joyce Evans:** Yes.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** They are one of the prettiest plants and you don't have to do much to them once they're happy, and you just have to watch them and they bring in a lot of bees and a lot of pollinators. So it's one of our favorite plants.

**Joyce Evans:** That's very important. [OVERLAPPING] Speaking of bees and pollinators, I have another project for Fort Laramie that I'd like to throw out there.

**Jeff Edwards:** Okay, let's have it.

**Joyce Evans:** This is an unapproved present time idea, but it's an embryonic idea. I have the dream of starting a native plant garden. We were very kindly donated a replica wagon, a Conestoga-type wagon from the fort. It wasn't exactly historically accurate, but we got that as a donation and it sits up next to town hall. My idea is to have that wagon surrounded by an accessible garden made up of all native plants from this area, the prairie plants. And my resident experts have told me that there are at least 50 varieties of plants that they can think of that we could put in that area and have it clearly labeled and also accessible.

I'm thinking that this could, for a very small portion of the population, be a destination also because I know there are people who are very interested in native plants at this time. So in order to enhance the pollinator and the bird populations and to try to get a few people who were interested in the actual native plants, I think we could pull that off in a little area in front of town hall. So that's an idea that I've been working on and had started doing some on the ground looking and getting that done.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Joyce, I think that's a great idea. A long time ago I know one of the greenhouses donated some plants and they were designated for plants along the Oregon Trail. So that goes with that theme that seems reminiscent of that kind of thing. As people traveled West, they planted a few things in attempts to help some of the people that we're following, and apparently there's still some garlics and onions surviving along the trail even now.

Yeah, you might even think about some bees, and if you have someone that knows how to shepherd those bees. My neighbor purchased some Italian bees and claims that they are very, very gentle, that you can even stick your hand inside the box [00:24:00] and they won't sting you. So they're unlike a lot of the other bees that I've been associated with, and they were good singers for them. But these Italian bees are supposed to be really tame.

**Joyce Evans:** I think most of the commercial bee operations go with the Italian bees, and they are relatively kind. However, if you threaten their hive they're predestined to sting you and then they die. So we would prefer not to be stung and not to kill the bees. One thing I've been concerned about recently because I've been reading that those Italian bees that we bring in are actually competing with the native bees, and not all of our native bees are honey producers, but they are pollinators and they're really important to keep the process going that we count on bees to pollinate. But they're pollinating a lot of plants that we don't eat. I think there's a balance. I think we have to be careful and cognizant of what we do with bees. I would really like to use a lot of native plants and try to encourage the native bee population as well as the other insects that pollinate. Flies pollinate, a lot of insects pollinate plants that we don't even think about.

**Jeff Edwards:** The thing that's flying around right now that people are complaining about are the Miller moths. But they are also pollinators, so that's what they're doing. They're collecting in places where there are flowers and annoying people, but they are also pollinating. So even though they are beneficial at this stage, their immatures are what people don't like as well, so cutworms.

**Joyce Evans:** So yeah, I think we need to be aware of those things and not overly treat our gardens and our yards because we have unintended consequences when we do that.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Sure.

**Jeff Edwards:** In many different ways.

**Joyce Evans:** Yes.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Joyce, can I ask you about your water in Fort Laramie? My understanding is that you have some of the most pure water in our area. Do you put a restriction on the water? Do you charge per gallon or per 100? How does the town of Fort Laramie do that?

**Joyce Evans:** Our municipal water supply is metered and we do charge. We have a base charge and then we charge per gallon. We have quite a large ceiling right now, high ceilings, so it's 10,000 gallons you can use before you get extra. It's treated water, it's chlorinated water. I think that the awards we won were for the taste of the water, not necessarily the chemical composition of the water and our water is relatively high pH. It's a basic water, and so it isn't super for plants, but it's not harmful. But we could probably do better for our plants. It's great for human intake, but not quite so good for the plants.

Of course, all the soils around here are fairly alkaline, so we're going to have a lot of the [00:27:00] salts. We also have in town shares from the canal. So we have ditch water that several people use on their yards and gardens. I use it on my garden and have excellent results. It's a flood irrigation system, but we also allow people to pump that water when it's available. That is a little bit extra but not very much. You pay one time per season and you get the water as long as it's available, and that's a really good system to water things like yards so that you're not using the municipal water that we have treat, then we're not using our pumps that pump out of our wells. So there are several ways to get water here in Fort Laramie.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** My uncle lived in Fort Laramie, Leo Erschabeck, and he would flood irrigate his yard and also flood irrigate his garden. He produced just excellent gardens and he had a really luscious lawn. I remember him flooding his yard, and I’m going, what are you doing? But you bet, that seemed to work really well.

**Joyce Evans:** It does work very well. I've been really impressed with it. A lot of people are very hesitant to use it because of possible damage to their buildings, which you do that to watch that. You don't really want to flood your basement every week. We've been very, very pleased with the results we had with the flood irrigation. I think there's a lot of organic material in that water, and if you think that it's already flown through several larger towns before it gets here, yeah we could probably go into the organic compounds that are in it, but we don't really want to think about that. But it's great for plants.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** So Jeff, I know that you're in to a hoop house and you're using a hoop house. With these growing temperatures that were having, are you having any difficulty keeping your hoop house below scalding?

**Jeff Edwards:** Well, we do have the sides rolled up. We have a shade cloth on it and I walked in there yesterday afternoon when it was, how hot was it yesterday? Fairly warm. Our peas are the only things that seem to be struggling with the high temperature. They're are about 50 inches tall and once they get up into that really warm zone, the tops start dying out. So yeah, there's some issues with it being really warm right now, but I've got to say the way things are growing in there and other things that's just fantastic. I've got sweet corn that's up to my waist now and I can't see the tassels starting yet, so I don't know how big it's going to get.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** So on the geodesic dome that you're planning on building for Fort Laramie, will there be a circle error escape at the top? That's a solid structure. So will there be any way of having a window in there to expel some of the heat?

**Jeff Edwards:** Yeah. So what we've done is we'll put in a what I call a Dutch door or a split door, so it swings top and bottom separately. So you can close the bottom door, open the top door, and then we also put in [00:30:00] a automatic louvered vent up high enough so that any trapped heat can escape right out through the roof. Though it will still get hot in that structure, but hopefully, the plants will be able to survive. Unfortunately, when it gets above 100 degrees the plants start shutting down and not growing. But we have to be able to control that environment a little bit and you can't just fill it full of vents because that becomes really expensive. [OVERLAPPING]

**Jerry Erschabeck:** So is that when it gets to be into those hundreds, that's when you start moving everything from inside outside?

**Jeff Edwards:** No, there are things that will survive still at those temperatures. They'll just start growing a little bit slower. Now, if you closed it up completely, you would have salsa in the high tunnel. [LAUGHTER] You would cook everything. Yeah.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Whether you wanted it or not.

**Jeff Edwards:** Because if you walk away from it and forget to open it up on a 90 degree day, it'll be 150-160 degrees in there and it'll just cook it.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Just like an automobile.

**Jeff Edwards:** Just like an automobile. Yeah. Light gets in, heat can't get out, it's a bad deal.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Yeah.

**Jeff Edwards:** All right. It's time to take a break and we'll take a few minutes and listen to our sponsors and be back in a moment.

**Female Narrator:** You are listening to the Lawn and Garden podcast presented by University of Wyoming Extension, extending the land grant mission across the state of Wyoming with a wide variety of educational programs and services. Visit us at wyoextension.org. [MUSIC]

**Female Narrator:** Do you have questions about the coronavirus or COVID-19? Go to uwyocnp.org/coronavirus/uw-extension to find reliable information, community resources, and recipes using the food in your pantry. [MUSIC]

**Jeff Edwards:** Okay, we're back. This is Jeff Edwards and Jerry Erschabeck for the KGOS/KERM Lawn and Garden program. Our guest today is Joyce Evans, gardener, grower, mayor of Fort Laramie. So we've been talking about things that are going on in Fort Laramie right now. Joyce, is there anything else that you'd like to add about growing, gardening?

**Joyce Evans:** Well, yes. We didn't talk about flowers. We talked a lot about vegetables, but we haven't talked about flowers. We have flowers in Fort Laramie. Again, these were planted by our preschool children.

**Jeff Edwards:** Fantastic.

**Joyce Evans:** They were so excited to have baby flowers in our flower pots, in our flower beds, they're not pots. We have a little Veterans Memorial at Memorial Park, [inaudible] Park. We have always purchased flowers to put in those beds. But this year our preschoolers started [00:33:00] plants. We have quite the assortment of plants. We're not sure that everything is labeled as to what it actually is, but we're very excited. Because we have everything from [inaudible], to Shasta daisies, to forget-me-nots, and dianthus, and all sorts of exciting, wonderful things that our preschoolers put into the dirt.

**Jeff Edwards:** That's great.

**Joyce Evans:** They're going to be able to watch all summer as our flower beds start to grow and to blossom. They look a little puny right now, but I think that everything is still alive and we even had some perennials planted. So we have some Echinacea which is the plant native to this area. We are so excited to see our little kids work, start to bloom, and enhance our park. So we've got [OVERLAPPING]

**Jeff Edwards:** You've mentioned the preschoolers several times. How many are there in Fort Laramie?

**Joyce Evans:** We had, I think five to six were enrolled in our little preschool. They were very interested little children. They did a lot of nature walks down on the confluence trail by the river and looked for plants there. The name of the preschool is Planting Roots Preschool.

**Jeff Edwards:** Perfect.

**Joyce Evans:** It lends itself well to planting seeds. So we are very excited to have an educational opportunity for our little children. Hopefully, we can involve the elementary and even high school kids later on. But we're starting with the preschool that we have in-house here. So it's really exciting to have that opportunity for kids here.

**Jeff Edwards:** That's really good. I remember gardening with my parents and I think I was restricted to weed pulling, but it was outside of the garden space. [LAUGHTER]

**Joyce Evans:** Wisely. [LAUGHTER]

**Jeff Edwards:** Yeah. I hated it then. But now I find weed pulling therapeutic. I know it's a 100 percent control. I know they won’t usually grow back if I pull it. So it's a satisfying time to go out and pull weeds for half an hour or 45 minutes, or just something a little bit different.

**Joyce Evans:** Right. Especially early in the morning before it gets hot outside.

**Jeff Edwards:** Right. Yep.

**Jerry Erschabek:** My wife and I were just talking about that just the other day. We thought that we would start getting up about 4 o'clock and going to bed about 6 p.m. to beat the heat. We just haven't gotten that switched over yet. [LAUGHTER].

**Joyce Evans:** It's hard.

**Jerry Erschabek:** Joyce, I think I'd like to send your preschoolers some giant pumpkins from the Giant Pumpkin Growing Committee. So where would I send those seeds to? The Community Center?

**Joyce Evans:** You could send it to Town Hall at the Community Center, yes. Or you could send it to Laura Curtsinger who is the teacher. Yes, they would love some giant pumpkin seeds.

**Jerry Erschabek:** The Town Hall is just a safe [00:36:00] address to give? Do you have that address?

**Joyce Evans:** It is Post Office Box 77, I believe. But we’re Fort Laramie so if that's wrong, we'll get it anyway.

**Jerry Erschabek:** We'll get it. [LAUGHTER] That sounds good.

**Jeff Edwards:** Just address it to Joyce Evans, Fort Laramie, Wyoming. It'll get there.

**Joyce Evans:** It'll get there. [LAUGHTER]

**Jerry Erschabek:** You got it. Mayor Joyce Evans, Fort Laramie.

**Joyce Evans:** I will probably get it. [LAUGHTER]

**Jeff Edwards:** One of the things I need to let folks to watch out for are ticks, this year. I've had several. We've never had ticks where we lived in the past, and I've pulled three off myself the last week, couple off of my dog. So if you're out and about, make sure that you're watching for ticks. If you are not opposed to treating your animals to control them or reduce their numbers, it is time to do that. So just be aware.

**Jerry Erschabek:** Ticks can make you very sick. So you bet, the best time to get them is before they start burrowing into your skin. Do you have a time tested way of ridding yourself of burrowed tick?

**Jeff Edwards:** I catch them before they get a hold. [LAUGHTER]

**Jerry Erschabek:** Usually a warm object on their rear end is a good method. Also, some of the oils that people have now, the essential oils, there are several of those that ticks do not seem to like. Then you can buy the tick remover that comes in a complete package.

**Jeff Edwards:** So you mentioned some of the diseases that ticks carry, Lyme disease is one of them, but we don't have Lyme disease in Wyoming, fortunately.

**Jerry Erschabek:** Mostly on the east coast, yes.

**Jeff Edwards:** Well, east and west coast. The one that we do have is Rocky Mountain Spotted Tick Fever, which is probably worse than [LAUGHTER] Lyme disease, but incidents of it are really low. But you really want to watch for ticks and make sure that you don't let them burrow in. An odd thing that ticks can cause, it's called tick paralysis. I've never seen cases of this, I've only heard cases of this. But if you have a dog that is lethargic and won't get up, check him for ticks. Apparently, it's some type of a reaction with the tick saliva as they've bitten into the dog, and as soon as you remove that tick, that response goes away within a relatively short amount of time. So it's just another thing to watch out for. [LAUGHTER] Ticks are bad. They're not a good time.

**Jerry Erschabek:** Not a good thing.

**Joyce Evans:** One thing that eats ticks is opossums. They will eat ticks, so don't run over an opossum when you see it. [OVERLAPPING] Because they're voracious eaters of ticks.

**Jeff Edwards:** Well, anything that opossums [00:39:00] eat, then opossums are good, right?

**Joyce Evans:** Right. [LAUGHTER]

**Jerry Erschabek:** We've had opossums at our house and they do the "I'm dead" trick to avoid any more confrontation.

**Jeff Edwards:** I'm dead, look at my teeth.

**Jerry Erschabek:** Yeah. [LAUGHTER] [OVERLAPPING]

**Jeff Edwards:** Jerry, when you mentioned that you've had opossum at your house, that sounds like you ate one.

**Jerry Erschabek:** No. [LAUGHTER] I relocated him over the fence and because he was bothering my cats as well. So he was relocated across the fence and checked on him and about 15 minutes later, he was gone. We have seen some raccoons on our deck. You always notice a strange noise, if curtains are closed, turned on the light, there was this big mama raccoon [LAUGHTER] sitting on our deck. Jeff, could I go back to last week. You said something about relocating snakes. I was wondering if you remember that. Did you say something about you cannot relocate a snake over 10 miles?

**Jeff Edwards:** Yeah, um. So that wasn't me, that was our guest. Gary Stone made a comment about you couldn't move a snake further than a mile from its current location or something like that. I'd never heard that before.

**Jerry Erschabek:** Well, I hadn't neither.

**Jeff Edwards:** I don't know the distance, I don't know the exact distance. That would be a question for Game & Fish, I think.

**Jerry Erschabek:** Yeah, perhaps.

**Jeff Edwards:** I just thought that that was interesting too. [LAUGHTER] I wouldn't take the time to relocate a snake further than [LAUGHTER] a mile.

**Jerry Erschabek:** No, I would not either.

**Jeff Edwards:** I just want it out of my immediate area.

**Jerry Erschabek:** So Joyce, have you seen or heard of reports of snakes in or near Fort Laramie?

**Joyce Evans:** Occasionally, we have a bullsnake. I've heard of rattlesnakes, but I'm not sure that the reporter was aware of the difference between various types of snakes. I have not seen more than one in town, but I'm sure there's a possibility and we do live where the snakes lived here first. So we know we could have snakes.

**Jerry Erschabek:** Yeah. So one of the things that I, and you talked about flowers, they're at Fort Laramie. One of the things I've always appreciated driving through are your iris beds in front of the information center. I'm an iris fan myself and here at our office we have iris and daisies growing together. I never thought that that would be a good combination, but man, it just shows off those iris like crazy. The white with a green foliage, takes up little space and gets rid of weeds. Anytime you can cover those.

**Joyce Evans:** You were volunteering then to come help me separate those iris that are in front of the information center because they're getting very root bound [00:42:00] there. Is that correct?

**Jerry Erschabek:** Yeah. [LAUGHTER] I didn't realize that I was volunteering. Yeah. But those you can actually sell, if you're looking for community funds, if you get some volunteers to do that, and you can actually say, hey, I've got some iris bulbs or iris rhizomes. What are they, Jeff? I think that they are iris rhizomes. [OVERLAPPING]

But when you do that, when you do dig an iris up, you certainly can do it most anytime. Most people recommend that they do it after they bloom. So still, right now is not the time. But when you actually do that, you can clip the foliage into a upward arrow and take apart any of the root bulb that you have, break them apart, and then you can have a whole bunch of them. Even if you sold them at a minimal amount, you could have quite a few iris. If you kinda label them, if you know where you're at, if you're going to start doing that, you could start being Fort Laramie's capital of iris selling.

**Joyce Evans:** [LAUGHTER] Sounds like an economic venture there. Yes.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** [LAUGHTER] Well, you seem to be having quite a few things going on in Fort Laramie. Iris selling would be one of those additional opportunities.

**Joyce Evans:** That sounds like an excellent idea. Excellent. I could get rid of some of mine that I need to separate too so we could fund the town with iris roots. I like that.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** I'm really fond of the yellow ones.

**Joyce Evans:** They are pretty.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Now, I have a few brilliant white ones. But my friend says, “Boy, I just don't care for those white Iris.” I love them. Any bloom that's very white will show iridescent in the dark. They just really come out there. Jeff, do you have a favorite color of iris?

**Jeff Edwards:** Anything in the purple or dark blue, I think. Diane has a knack to pick yellow ones when she's transplanting them, so we have a lot of yellow ones. She's trying to figure out how to get rid of the yellow ones. [LAUGHTER]

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Pick me! I love the yellow ones.

**Jeff Edwards:** Do you really?

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Absolutely. I really do.

**Jeff Edwards:** We could supply you with a truckload.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** [LAUGHTER] All right. For those that don't know, Jeff was temporarily offline and he [inaudible] hear us.

**Jeff Edwards:** I was experiencing some technical difficulties that were pretty significant.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Yeah. But I was telling Joyce that I enjoy the iris in front of the community center, in front of the Information Center there in Fort Laramie and I suggested that maybe she tagged them and start selling them. I asked the question, while you were gone, is it an iris rhizome or iris bulb?

**Jeff Edwards:** It's not a bulb. It's either a rhizome or a stolon, and I [00:45:00] don't know the difference between the two. I think it's a stolon. I think a rhizome is more of on a spreading grass and I think it's a stolon that is more tuber potato-like. Is that right, Joyce?

**Joyce Evans:** I'm going to defer to the agricultural expert. [LAUGHTER]

**Jeff Edwards:** Yeah, there was a third option that you didn't ask. [LAUGHTER]

**Jerry Erschabeck:** I was telling her that we have iris with daisies and they really do [OVERLAPPING] seem to compliment each other with the bright white yellow button eye on the daisy with the green foliage of the iris. I think next week, we'll have Tom McCreery and he likes to talk about iris as well.

**Jeff Edwards:** Good. I think next week will be the week for irises.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** All of the ones here in the office are in full bloom.

**Jeff Edwards:** Okay. We've just started, though, we're a little bit behind.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Joyce, have you found an area to plant your peony? Have you looked at the area that you're going to do that at?

**Joyce Evans:** I have not selected the area yet. I have some ideas. I was told that there used to be a lovely peony bush in front of my house. I have an older house and I think that I might try that spot again. But I'm going to have to suggest someone else leave that spot. I haven't quite worked out the logistics of the move.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Yeah. I had a hole dug, I filled it full of water, I waited until it was about eight o'clock in the evening, and then I went ahead and transplanted that into a watered hole. You might try that technique. That seemed to work fair. My peony is still standing, but I don't know for how much longer.

**Joyce Evans:** Well, that's good advice.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Earlier you mentioned that your peony was in too shady of an area. I think the peony does like a lot of sunshine.

**Joyce Evans:** I think so. At least six hours or so and this turned out to have a shade tree that grew over it. But before the leaves were on, I didn't notice that. I just didn't notice that there was a tree there. [LAUGHTER]

**Jeff Edwards:** Peonies are notoriously bad for being good transplanters anyway. There's always a shock period for them and then it's a couple of years, and then you start wondering, well, did I transplant it too deep? They are very sensitive plants to human manipulation. Let's put it that way.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** I've found the same with oriental poppies, those orange poppies that we see. There's an alley in Torrington that this guy, they overrun his little area. There should be more of them at my house. But transplanting [00:48:00] those, Gee whiz, I've not being able to transplant those whatsoever.

**Jeff Edwards:** Well, wait a minute, Jerry, you haven't been sneaking there in the middle of the night and borrowing plants, have you?

**Jerry Erschabeck:** No. But I have had permission from a [LAUGHTER] couple of people and I just can't seem to transplant them, and it doesn't matter what time of the year.

**Jeff Edwards:** What about waiting until there are seeds and try to start seeds?

**Jerry Erschabeck:** I've tried that as well. I need some help though in knowing how to capture the seed, because one day, you're looking, you're looking, looking, and then the next day, they're gone. They've just opened up and they scatter pretty fair.

**Jeff Edwards:** When the wind starts blowing, they're just all gone.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Scatter. I need some help with some technique to capture seed. If anybody's out there listening and has some good ideas, I'd certainly appreciate hearing about it.

**Joyce Evans:** Try putting a paper bag over the seed head after the petals are gone and it's started to dry. Put a paper bag upside down over the seed head and use a twisty tie to tie the bottom shut. Then the seeds will fall into your paper bag.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** All right. I'll try that as well.

**Jeff Edwards:** That [LAUGHTER] day that you're looking at them and thinking, okay, tomorrow is going to be the day, that's the day you put your paper sack on. [LAUGHTER]

**Joyce Evans:** That's right.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** I'm willing to try almost anything. I just really like those, the big orange ones. Now, I really also like the California poppies and they will grow with the seed easy enough. I'm okay with those. Those big Orientals.

**Jeff Edwards:** The California poppies are annuals. Are those the ones that you're referring to, Jerry?

**Jerry Erschabeck:** They're perennial.

**Jeff Edwards:** Any other things going on in the county that we need to let folks know about? I know that the farmer's markets are probably on hold. I think the Goshen County extension office is open, as far as receiving visitors.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** I think that they want you to call first.

**Jeff Edwards:** Yeah, I agree.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** I think they want you to call first and state your business, and then they'll do their utmost to accommodate you.

**Jeff Edwards:** Sure.

**Jeff Edwards:** It's summer time, things are growing. [LAUGHTER]

**Jerry Erschabeck:** I could give you the standard, bend your knees. When you're hoeing, raking, shoveling, lift with your legs, hydrate, and use sunscreen.

**Jeff Edwards:** Exactly.

**Jeff Edwards:** Yeah. [LAUGHTER]

**Jerry Erschabeck:** The other day I was out too long and I got overheated, and started to go, Myrna, I don't feel so good. [LAUGHTER] I had to go in and take a shower. It was too hot.

**Jeff Edwards:** Find a shady spot. Yeah. It can happen fairly quickly. I think we've, once again, ran out of time. [00:51:00] Is there anything else you'd like to add, Joyce?

**Joyce Evans:** Well, we have built a splash pad. It has not officially opened. But as soon as we have the health department's okay and a few little plumbing details worked out, there will be running water that you can run through in Fort Laramie, as soon as it's safe enough to do that.

**Jeff Edwards:** Okay. That sounds like a good time. Jerry, do you have anything else to add this week?

**Jerry Erschabeck:** As a matter of fact, if you're wanting to plant some plants to attract dragonflies and decrease mosquitoes, black-eyed Susans, meadow sage, yarrow, and dwarf Sagittaria. It's an aquatic plant for ponds.

**Jeff Edwards:** Interesting.

**Joyce Evans:** [OVERLAPPING] A lot of those don't take much water, so that sounds great.

**Jeff Edwards:** Yeah.

**Jeff Edwards:** The other part of that is dragon flies are aquatic. They need water, their larva live in ponds, and so you would also need to have a water source relatively close by in order to keep them around.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Let me ask this, since you brought it up, do they like a shallow area or is it okay just for deep, for dragonflies, do they like a little marshy area?

**Jeff Edwards:** A little marshy. Their larva are predacious on a whole lot of different things, so dragonflies, damselflies all need aquatic habitats in order to thrive.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** All right. Good deal. Thank you for having me as your co-host.

**Jeff Edwards:** As always.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** As always.

**Jeff Edwards:** We're glad you're here, and Joyce, thank you for joining us today. For those of you listening, we appreciate you spending your time with us and we'll see you next week.

**Female Narrator:** [MUSIC] You've been listening to Lawn and Garden, with University of Wyoming Extension Specialist Jeff Edwards and co-host Jerry Erschabeck. Thanks for listening. [MUSIC]