**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.

**Jeff Edwards:** Good morning, everybody. This is Jeff Edwards and Jerry Erschabeck on the KGOS/KERM Lawn and Garden Program. How are you, Jerry?

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Hey, doing really well, thank you. The temperatures are starting to level off there.

**Jeff Edwards:** It's about dang time. [LAUGHTER]

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Yeah.

**Jeff Edwards:** Also, our guest today is Jane Dorn from Lingle, and we will be talking about native plants. Hello Jane, how are you?

**Jane Dorn:** Hi Jeff, Jerry.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Hey Jane.

**Jeff Edwards:** We're glad you're with us today. We are going to take a few moments to listen to our sponsors and we'll be right back in a moment. [MUSIC]

**Female Narrator:** [Music] You are listening to the Lawn and Garden podcast presented by University of Wyoming Extension. All caught up on this year's episodes? Stay tuned for episodes from last season coming soon to Spotify or your favorite podcast streaming site.

**Jeff Edwards:** Okay, we're back. This is Jeff Edwards and Jerry Erschabeck for the KGOS/KERM Lawn and Garden Program. Our guest is Jane Dorn and we will be talking about native plants today. So we've had some pretty wild weather once again, but it is Wyoming and so when we're talking about native plants, they're more adapted. Are they not, Jane, to certain conditions that we have?

**Jane Dorn:** Yes, they certainly are. A good example, we had a hard freeze just about the time a lot of our trees were starting to put their sap up. I noticed quite a lot of damage to trees just from that one event, and you do notice almost always more damage to the non-natives than you do to the natives. But even though the non-natives they're suited to USDA Zone 4, they still maybe aren't accustomed to those late spring freezes that can really do damage to the plant when they're starting to come out of their winter dormancy.

**Jeff Edwards:** We had a mountain ash that we planted two years ago that it probably was eight feet tall at the time, and I think that late spring freeze that we got nailed it because all the top growth is dead and now we have sprouts coming up from the bottom. So Diane and I are talking about converting it to a bush instead of a mountain ash tree. [LAUGHTER]

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Good plan. At least you're not going to just go ahead and kill the tree, bush. Slash bush.

**Jeff Edwards:** Well, it makes me irritated that we have to replace it. Anyhow.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Now, dozens of mountain ash have a reddish bloom, or is that a red berry?

**Jeff Edwards:** It's a reddish berry. [00:03:00] Jane may know more about them than I do. Are they native or not?

**Jane Dorn:** There is a native species, but most of the ones that are sold through the nurseries, unless you do some searching, are European species and they're beautiful. They have pretty white flowers and then beautiful orange berries in the fall, but as Jeff has just told you, that one might have been a Zone 4, but it wasn't a “Zone 4 Oops Spring Freeze.”

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Right. [LAUGHTER]

**Jeff Edwards:** Plants are funny, but they know how to recover if they can. So going down that route, Jane, natives that you would like to talk about today.

**Jane Dorn:** First, in general, I think most of our listeners probably know that native plants for the area are much better adapted to our climate and often to our soils, we get a lot of wind, our soils are always on the alkaline side, and some plants just flat won't grow in those alkaline soils. But the natives have learned to deal with them. I won't say a native will always survive because they're even things that can get to native plants.

But there are a very good choice and I want to stress that you don't have to grow all natives to have natives in your landscape, you can mix and match whatever you like. It's always fun to try a few natives, there are more and more native species being offered by nurseries around the area.

**Jeff Edwards:** Very good. [OVERLAPPING]

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Jane, do you collect a lot of native seeds? Is that the best way to transplant or to plant some of these native plants?

**Jane Dorn:** I have collected native seed and grown out native seed. It depends on what your patience is like and how good you are at identifying native plants when you collect them. The difficult thing for many people who are not experienced in this area is they see something they like in bloom, but then they don't know what it looks like in seed unless they specifically mark plants and know that this is the plant that I saw And sometimes they aren't sure what they're getting when they go back in the fall to collect the seed. It certainly is doable, there are lots of people that do it and if you've got some native seed or you've got access to a place where there's some plants blooming that you really like, then collecting native seed is certainly an option.

You do have to be patient when you're growing things from native seed. These are not like your garden annuals that you can just throw out and everything comes up. Many of them need to be stratified, which means they need to overwinter and be subject to that cooling cycle. Then, of course, the other thing that happens is many native plants do not germinate all their seed at one time, I guess you could say they hold some in reserve. They may have a little bit germinate this year and some more next year and some more the third year, and I have actually had native seed that I planted and it's three or four years, I was just like, "It finally came up. Where has it been all [00:06:00] this time?"

But if you are going to grow from native seed, the best thing I would say is grow in a protected location, where rats and whatever else you have in the environment can't get in and eat the seed. There's a very simple way to grow things from native seed, which is you plant them in the late fall. Well, here's what I use: a gallon milk jug cutoff at the top, filled with a good potting soil, put your seeds in, water them good, cram the top back on, be sure you take the lid off, set them in a shady spot, and don't pay attention to them until next spring.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** And just see what comes up and see how many germinate?

**Jane Dorn:** Yes, and label them too. It does help to label what you've just planted. It's a good idea to put a date and location where you collected the seed and you can either do that right on the jug with a marker or maybe you like to keep a notebook or put it in some other format. Then look and see what starts to come up, and then at that point once it gets too big for the jug, then you can either transfer them to the next size up pot or if you've got a good spot for them, maybe they're ready to set out. Again, these little seedlings are small, so you want to give them some protection from the elements and you want to be sure you water them even though they're natives, they are not no care at this stage. Of course, you want to keep the pocket gophers or the gophers or the chipmunks or rabbits, whatever you've got in your yard that is sampling your vegetation.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** I always want to keep them away if you can. Jane, with the advent of the cell phones and the really nice cameras that are attached to it, I've been growing iris, and I'll go to a friend's house, and I'll go, "Gosh, I don't know if I have that one,” but if I would have taken pictures of the iris that I had, then it makes it much easier. I would think that if you would put a stake down and take a picture of it in bloom, and then take a picture of it in seed or else go back when you think it's going to be seeding, you could probably be more lucky on collecting seed, don't you think?

**Jane Dorn:** Oh yeah. I think using every bit of modern technology you can is great. If you take a picture of something and don't know what it is, you can almost always go to your county extension agent and they'll help you get something identified if you don't know what it is.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Yeah.

**Jeff Edwards:** Well, those of us in Extension, we try to do our best to help folks identify plants.

**Jane Dorn:** I know. [LAUGHTER]

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Jane, Jeff has an app on his phone that will identify insects and also will identify a lot of different plants. Isn't that right, Jeff?

**Jeff Edwards:** Yeah. I have one that's for both, actually. I think it's called PlantNet, P-L-A-N-T-N-E-T. [00:09:00] [OVERLAPPING]

**Jane Dorn:** Okay. [OVERLAPPING] Well, that obviously will be a good resource for people.

**Jeff Edwards:** Yeah. I've used it multiple times, folks. "Hey, what's this tree?" Jerry, you've talked about the Mayday tree before?

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Right.

**Jeff Edwards:** I've paid attention when you've talked about it, but I've never really [LAUGHTER] paid attention to what the tree looks like out in public, and somebody sent me a picture and said, "Hey, what's this tree?" So I found where it was at and took a picture of it and used PlantNet and said it was the Mayday.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Like, "There you go."

**Jeff Edwards:** That make sense. Now I know what it looks like. [LAUGHTER]

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Yeah, I think it's a nice tree, all right.

**Jeff Edwards:** Yeah.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** It has little berries like a chokecherry.

**Jeff Edwards:** Okay, sure.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** But it certainly is not a chokecherry.

**Jeff Edwards:** Jane, I've used it to identify natives in the landscape per say, things that I've seen as I've been out and about doing calls. Particularly, along roadsides where things happened to show up. I've taken pictures of those and it comes close to identifying them, if not exactly identifying them. So it's a good little app.

**Jane Dorn:** Okay. Well, that's one I hadn't used. I probably hadn't needed it for [LAUGHTER] one thing. Every resource helps people when they're getting familiar with the native plants, and we do have a few of those weeds that have a halfway attractive flower on them, you don't want to start introducing those into your yard or you'll regret it exceedingly. [LAUGHTER] It would be like introducing dandelions deliberately. [LAUGHTER]

**Jerry Erschabeck:** My mother-in-law said the dandelion should be the state flower because they're so easy to grow and greenhouses would make a mint. [LAUGHTER]

**Jane Dorn:** No, they wouldn't because everybody would discover that they grow readily from seed.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Yes, they do.

**Jeff Edwards:** Yeah.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** So Jane, Joyce Evans was on our program. She's the mayor of Fort Laramie. She is wanting to plant a native garden area. So maybe you wouldn't mind, maybe giving her a jingle and maybe helping her out.

**Jane Dorn:** I have talked to Joyce about that very subject and I'll certainly help her because I know her very well. We've had some discussions about that.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Yeah. There you go.

**Jane Dorn:** She's actually had some experience in her own yard with a few natives. So she's starting to get pretty knowledgeable also.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** On the north side of my office, I have a wooden fence that is congruent with the alley and on the west side of that, some native grasses have blown in and actually taken root. I was too lazy to chop them out and they're not so bad.

**Jane Dorn:** I agree. We have a lot of very attractive native grasses in this area. I'm a firm believer that you should [00:12:00] mix the grasses in with your flowers. They really add to the appeal of a landscape and actually make it look more like something native. If you throw in some very attractive native grasses, little bluestem is a beautiful grass, all year round and later gives you some winner interest. We have sand bluestem and big bluestem, beautiful grasses that are used for landscaping purposes. They're good forage, but they're also, as a speciman grass, gorgeous in a landscape.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Yeah. Would you say that the native plants take up less water once they're established?

**Jane Dorn:** Pretty much. Well, if you think about it, if you've got a plant that's native, it's getting by on whatever our natural rainfall is. There isn't any place, even in a good year where we're talking mostly under 20 inches, 15 inches, and I'm sure we've all could remember the years when it was like 10 inches. These natives can survive that kind of a situation because when the rainfall is really low, they just go dormant. They just don't worry about producing seeds or flowers. They just sit there and maintain themselves fairly and then when conditions improve, why back they they come again. So they have techniques for surviving low water and all the other conditions that we have and then when things are a little better, up they come again.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** We've driven from Torrington to Cheyenne and on some hillsides, on wet springs, you'll see just a flush of wild flowers blooming. It's just beautiful.

**Jane Dorn:** I agree. I've seen the same thing.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** So they've just laid there dormant, right?

**Jane Dorn:** Yes. If they're perennials, they are just laid there without blooming, you could probably, if you really look, could find a little cluster of leaves. Of course, if they're an annual that’s blooming, the seed is just laying there in the soil until conditions are right for germination.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Yeah. Now, we visited my brother and we went over to Wheatland one day last year. The blue flax, is that a native or is that something that's been sprinkled?

**Jane Dorn:** It is a native, but the Wyoming Department of Transportation has spread it around along a lot of the right away. So you do see a lot of it along road right away, but it is a native.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Now, that's another really pretty little plant and we used to have it, but it seemed to die out.

**Jane Dorn:** Yeah, I've had that same problem. It likes slightly disturbed areas and usually it lives no more than about two years. If you've got a good stand of it, a lot of times it'll just keep reseeding itself year after year, but you can get die out, particularly if you've got a lot of other plants coming in and you don't have the bare ground that you used to have.

**Jeff Edwards:** It doesn't compete well with others, is what [00:15:00] you're saying basically, right?

**Jane Dorn:** Right.

**Jeff Edwards:** Okay.

**Jane Dorn:** It just likes that more open environment, bare soil, and it does well there. As the other plants gradually grow in and create a closed environment, closed canopy, well, that dies out. That's not atypical. There's nothing wrong with plants or your gardening skills or anything else. It's just the natural cycle of that's occuring.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Go ahead.

**Jeff Edwards:** If you are killing stuff in your garden, maybe it's just the natural cycle. Maybe you can tell Myrna that.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** [LAUGHTER] Yeah. Sorry, honey.

**Jeff Edwards:** [LAUGHTER] That plant just died, I don't know what it was.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** She's the one with the new electric weed eater.

**Jeff Edwards:** Still Jerry, I am waiting for her to show up at my yard.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** [LAUGHTER] I think we need to talk terms. [LAUGHTER] Hey, Jane, so not all natives are a good plant, like cheatgrass is a native, isn't it?

**Jane Dorn:** No, it most certainly is not. It's an introduction that the world would like to get rid of. North America would like to get rid of it. Jeff can probably speak more to that than I could. There are certainly efforts to try to figure out how to at least reduce or control it. But I'm not sure that they've come up with a guaranteed method yet. Cheatgrass is an introduction.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Oh, boy.

**Jeff Edwards:** There are a lot of grasses that are coming behind it that are just as bad, if not a little bit worse. So part of the Invasive Species Act in the state of Wyoming that Weed and Pest are responsible for eliminating or reducing those invasives that we have. Don't say cheat's native. That’s just-

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Yeah, [LAUGHTER] I'm glad I was corrected.

**Jeff Edwards:** Just because there's a lot of it here, it doesn't mean that it is native. [LAUGHTER]

**Jerry Erschabeck:** It is hard to control. Even on a small acreage, I think we have a third of an acre. That cheatgrass just shows up uninvited, unwanted. My neighbor tried to get rid of the sweet peas then would just go crazy on spraying and torching it. Well, it's still here and the neighbor's gone. [LAUGHTER]

**Jeff Edwards:** I keep telling you, Jerry, it's those legacy plants that you're just going to go, "Okay, I'm sorry."

**Jerry Erschabeck:** I'm giving it space. [LAUGHTER] You're free to live right there.

**Jeff Edwards:** I'm giving up. I'm tired of fighting you.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Yeah.

**Jeff Edwards:** So, you know what? We're about halfway through our program. How about if we take a break and listen to our sponsors?

**Male 1:** [MUSIC] Boys and girls, green thumbs of all ages. Gardening and growing in Wyoming can be challenging, but yet a rewarding experience. The University of Wyoming Extension is here to help with a vast amount of how-to videos and resources to better assist you with all your gardening questions and needs. Our playlist is extensive [00:18:00] and includes resources on flowers and bulbs, fruit trees, grass and turf management, pest problems, soil and composting, starting your garden, and herbs and vegetables. All these resources are free of charge and on our website for you to use to make your gardening experience green and prosperous. Find all your gardening needs and resources at www.uwyocnp.org/gardening-videos. Remember, happy gardening and green thumbs.

**Female Narrator:** You've been listening to The Lawn and Garden podcast. For episode transcripts and more tips on gardening, visit bit.ly/UWEhorticulture. That's B-I-T.L-Y/ capitla UWE, lowercase horticulture.

**Jeff Edwards:** Okay, we're back. This is Jeff Edwards and Jerry Erschabeck with the KGOS/KERM Lawn and Garden Program. Our guest today is Jane Dorn. We are talking about native plants, not cheatgrass. So Jane, were there other things that you would like to talk about today as far as natives?

**Jane Dorn:** Well, we've pretty much covered the basics of why you might want to grow native. There's another program out there in this part of the world that can help people get interested in natives, and it's called Habitat Heroes, and it's sponsored by Audubon Rockies, and they have a website. It is rockies.audubon.org/habitatheroes. If you just put in the word "Habitat Heroes" in search, it'll come right up for you too. This is a program that is sponsored in the Rocky Mountains, Colorado, Wyoming to bring native plants back into the landscape, and they're particularly aimed at, I would say the person that has a small yard. We're not talking farms, although they are more than welcome to take advantage of the program. And they've done a lot on promoting native plants that particularly are good for native wildlife, particularly birds, and also native pollinators.

They've been sponsoring programs all over the region. And in Cheyenne, they've now in their sixth year of sponsoring an annual program on Habitat Heroes, and how to grow the natives, everything from soil to irrigation to seed sources. It's been a real diverse program with a lot of interest in that area. So it's a really good resource, and there's always something going on, and they have programs online that you can listen to on various aspects of this. Again, very definitely aimed at this part of the country. We're not talking something that was developed in the Eastern seaboard or anything like that. It's Rocky Mountain, it's right here in the Central Rockies where we live.

**Jeff Edwards:** Perfect. The program that is in Cheyenne, [00:21:00] does that typically happen at a specific time of year, or is it?

**Jane Dorn:** It's always in the late winter.

**Jeff Edwards:** Okay.

**Jane Dorn:** I think this year coming up, it's right toward the end of January of 2021. I haven't seen a confirm date yet, and it's always on a Saturday. It's usually an all day program with diverse speakers, and they usually try to bring in a keynote speaker from regional or a national speaker that can give some emphasis to it. Last year, the keynote speaker was Panayoti Kelaidis from the Denver Botanic Gardens who's basically got world experience in horticulture, and very definitely, a lot of it in the Rocky Mountains and what they do there.

I'm not sure yet what the pin down is on the speaker for this coming year, I know they're working on it right now. They'll have lots of good supporting speakers to go with it, and I think they’re going to again have a hands on plant your own native seed in milk jugs and take it home with you, so really a worthwhile program.

**Jeff Edwards:** One of the things that we've talked about, Jerry brought this up, is that a lot of the natives, once they get established, don't need as much water as what we think traditional plants might need. I think going forward in our landscapes, if we are concerned about water usage in Goshen County, we might want to start looking at some more of these native plants to try to still keep our yards looking good, but maybe not necessarily be needing the water requirements that we are using.

**Jane Dorn:** I absolutely agree with you, and a lot of these initiative on the native plant use came out of the Denver area because they are extremely concerned about their water use in Denver. They've just realized if they're going to support that huge population they've got, they've got to use less water, and of course, their hitting yards, and encouraging people to grow less turf and more native plants and other types of landscapes It may not have hit here yet, but it's coming. If you look at what you pay for a water bill in the summer, if you live even in one of our small towns, it can be pretty substantial over the summer. And very definitely, native plants that are adapted to this area, once they're established, they can usually get by on whatever falls from the sky. With maybe on a really dry year, you might have to go out a time or two with the hose and give them a drink, but you're not watering daily or weekly by any means.

**Jeff Edwards:** I'm thinking that, looking at how things are right now, I think this year is going to be really dry. I think listening to Don Day, the next couple of years might be just as dry, so if you are considering native plants, now might be the time to start establishing those beds.

**Jane Dorn:** Definitely.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Yeah. You can start small, you don't have to convert your whole yard. And I'm not throwing shade on the people that rock [00:24:00] their yards because that's pretty in it's own way also. But I sure like to have something living around our house. Not so much the weeds, but those native plants really fit the bill for a lot of people.

**Jane Dorn:** Well, I'm like you, Jerry. I understand why people do rock, but I also know that it doesn't support birds, it doesn't support your pollinators, and I'm like you, I like to see green around. It helps cool your house in the summer time. If you've got green around your house, maybe you've got some shade trees, those are all good things. It's just a matter of finding the balance of what you like around your house.

If you're wanting to go toward the low water, what they often refer to as xeroscaping, which does not mean rocks and cactus, it means getting by with the amount of water that comes from your natural climate. You can still have flowers, you can still have greenery, you can have lawn if you want it. You probably don't need to have an acre of lawn. I look at it this way. If you don't have an acre of lawn, you don't have an acre of lawn to mow, and water, and fertilize, and all the other things that go with it. If you especially like something that isn't really a low water plant that maybe you really like having roses around, there's lots of people that love roses. There's only a few native roses and they aren't the real showy ones, but that's okay. You put your roses in an area where you can attend to them, but you don't have to water the whole yard, like you would growing roses every place.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** So Jane, you brought up roses. Do native roses get the rust disease that commercial roses get?

**Jane Dorn:** They will certainly get rust. I can't tell you what species of rust, but it doesn't kill them, they just get rust, and they may lose a few leaves, but it's not going to kill the plants. They're not as susceptible to a lot of the diseases as your domestic roses are. Some of the domestic roses are being bred now to be much more resistant to disease, I know that. But your thing with your native roses is, they're all going to be single flowers, they're all going to have pink flowers or maybe light pink flowers, and they are all going to have thorns, lots of thorns. They are for a very specific place in the landscape. If you do grow them, you probably don't want them right by your front door where you step off into them or something like that because it's a thorny thing to step into. But they can also be attractive if you've got them in the right place because most of them produce those great big orange or red hips in the fall, which are also attractive.

**Jeff Edwards:** Yeah. Have you noticed, Jane, that even the roses, even the bush roses this year seem to be doing quite well? We drive around town and we see something that catches our eye, and there's this big giant rosebush. You said that most of the native [00:27:00] roses were pinkish?

**Jane Dorn:** Yes.

**Jeff Edwards:** What about that yellow rose that is considered the Oregon Trail rose, or the Miners rose?

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Not native.

**Jane Dorn:** It's not a native. It was brought in by the early homesteaders, and I think just about every homestead had one of those, and they will survive long after the homestead has been abandoned. There'll be the rosebush still growing and blooming, and I have family who have been in Wyoming since about 1885, and there's a yellow rosebush on their place.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Yeah.

**Jane Dorn:** They said they brought in from wherever they came from.

**Jeff Edwards:** It's just that crazy.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Sunrise, Wyoming is a great example of when the house is gone and still you have some yellow rosebushes there.

**Jane Dorn:** Yes.

**Jeff Edwards:** It's those legacy plants I keep telling you about, Jerry.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** They're hardy and they're nice, I love them.

**Jeff Edwards:** [LAUGHTER] The non-native legacy plants. [LAUGHTER]

**Jerry Erschabeck:** So Jane, did I remember hearing you talk about pestimens?

**Jane Dorn:** Penstemons? Yes, penstemons. Beardtongue is probably an easier term for most people to say. They look like little snapdragons. Those are the ones we have in Wyoming are blue, lavender, pink, or white, they run in that color range. A little bit further south, there are some red and orange ones, and people have really caught on to the penstemons as a group, and they're starting to do a lot of hybridization with them, so that now you can get some from the nurseries that have been developed specifically for yards, for growing in your yard, and they've got some neat color appearance to them. One that you may run into in the nurseries is called Husker Red. Would you like to guess where that one was developed?

**Jerry Erschabeck:** I'm going to say, Nebraska. [LAUGHTER]

**Jane Dorn:** [LAUGHTER] It is a very attractive plant, and it will grow here. I don't know it's parentage, but it has been developed from some of our native beardtongues. We've got about 30 species that we can possibly pick from.

**Jeff Edwards:** Okay. When we're referencing the beardtongue, you said the flower looks like a snapdragon?

**Jane Dorn:** Little miniature snapdragon.

**Jeff Edwards:** Is it the lower petal of the flower? It actually looks like it has a fuzzy time sticking out of it.

**Jane Dorn:** Yes, it does.

**Jeff Edwards:** Okay. Jerry, if you're interested, there are some penstemons that are right now blooming out on Sheep Creek Road. Take a drive.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** On the left side or the right side?

**Jeff Edwards:** South side, take a drive.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** South side. Good.

**Jeff Edwards:** Yeah.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Because I remember talking about that. I wrote that down one day when we were talking once before.

**Jeff Edwards:** Now, Jane, penstemons, are they annuals [00:30:00] or perennials?

**Jane Dorn:** Most of them are either short-lived perennials or biennials.

**Jeff Edwards:** What do you mean by short-lived perennial?

**Jane Dorn:** I've got some here in my yard and I've noticed about 3-5 years. Then that plant will die out, but there'll be a new clump coming over where the seed dropped someplace nearby. So that's pretty typical of them. So they're not long life perennials, but if you have a good site and they do produce quite a lot of seeds, and the seed is easy to collect in the fall. Seeds are of decent size, about radish seed size, and the capsules are easy to get seed out of. If you want to get some started next flowerbed over or whatever, you can certainly just scatter it in the fall of the year. But individual plants don't live a long time, it seems to be their nature. But 3-5 years is a good long span. Sometimes you get some lasting a little longer, but I had a clump about four years in a row out pretty close to my front door that I was watching. I notice this year that it’s gone, but there's some about five feet away from where it was. So I'm guessing that's where the seeds landed.

**Jeff Edwards:** A biennial penstemon, would it come up vegetatively the first year flower and fruit second year?

**Jane Dorn:** Then, flower and fruit the next year, yeah.

**Jeff Edwards:** Then they would die, and then their seeds would carry on, right?

**Jane Dorn:** Right. Actually, they're good plants to grow in the garden. They're very tough little plants and again, very drought tolerant. There are more and more of them available in the commercial nursery trade because they're very attractive plants. And the ones out of the little bit to the south of us that have a lot of the red flowers and the deep pink, and red’s always a popular color, there's all kinds of varieties of those showing up. If you see one that you like in that area, the chances are pretty good it'll grow here. I've had good success with some of the red ones.

**Jeff Edwards:** I've been told that they are one of the first ones that may rehabitat disturbed places, is that correct?

**Jane Dorn:** Yeah, they’ll come back in an area that's been disturbed and they're included in a lot of seed mixes that are for revegetative purposes like, oh let’s say a right-of-way or a pipeline right-of-way or something like that. They are often put in those seed mixtures because they come up fairly promptly in, I guess you should say, give you a feeling of success.

**Jeff Edwards:** [LAUGHTER] Something growing other than weeds. [LAUGHTER]

**Jane Dorn:** Correct.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** So Jane, perhaps you can help me with seed collection. You said that you identify it, but I know these poppies. I have a little trouble trying to transplant a poppy and it was suggested that I collect poppy seeds. My trouble is when I look [00:33:00] at the poppy and it's coming to fruition and the seed pod is getting dry, I'm always a day late. So how do you collect seed from a pod, the pod is still on the stem?

**Jane Dorn:** Well, if you're talking about our native poppies which are called prickly poppies for good reason, you probably want a pair of gloves in addition to everything else. A lot of times, I'll just take a pair of lightweight pruners and a paper sack. Just sort of hold the paper sack and take my pruners and reach up and clip the whole seed capsule off to just let it drop in the paper sack. That way, I'm not trying to shake the seed out which in Wyoming, usually results in the wind catching it, blowing it at every place and you get none of it. But if you just take a little pair of nippers or clippers and you just clip the seed pod off and let it drop into a paper sack, do several of those, you don't need a lot of seed. If you collect 100 seeds, you've more than collected all you will ever need.

Then write on it what it is, and where you got it, and a date is a good idea too. Leave it in that paper sack, you can just staple it shut. The seed pod will usually open or release the seed right into the paper sack. You don't lose it that way. Then when you're ready to plant, you've got your seed there, you open your paper sack and get some seed out. Or if you're one of those people who goes to the trouble of stratifying in your refrigerator, then you have to transfer it to that environment. That's a whole little extra step in itself that we'd have to go into. I recommend, if you can, with seeds like this, you should collect a native. If you've got a place where you can plant them out in the fall, just do it. If you can't and you know you're going to have to transplant, then try the overwinter in the milk jug planter. Those are the two simplest ways to go.

**Jeff Edwards:** [OVERLAPPING] Stratification is a cooling period, right? It's a period of time you have to keep it cool before it will germinate.

**Jane Dorn:** Right. Some plants require short periods, some require long periods. Some of our plants require no stratifications. A lot of the composites, the ones that you think are within the sunflower family, they don't require stratification and they'll often germinate as soon as you plant the seed.

**Jeff Edwards:** Okay.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** So Jane, the seed pod will actually just continue to dry?

**Jane Dorn:** Yes.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Then it will burst open?

**Jane Dorn:** Correct.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** I see. Yeah.

**Jeff Edwards:** So Jane, this is the lazy way, can you just take that seed packet and plant it? [LAUGHTER]

**Jane Dorn:** The whole pod? What you will end up with, as you well know, let's say there's 100 seeds in that pod or 50 or whatever, you'll get a clump all coming up together. The only disadvantage to that is if you want your plants to be spread out a little [00:36:00] bit, it's a little tricky to tease a bunch of little seedlings apart when they're all grown at about a three inch diameter space.

**Jeff Edwards:** That's like planting carrots, right?

**Jane Dorn:** Yes. [LAUGHTER] Only you probably can't eat these. [LAUGHTER]

**Jeff Edwards:** Probably not. [LAUGHTER] Oh, man.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** That's really good information. Because I've watched these poppies and watch them, and watch them, and I'm always a day late. So that's really a good plan.

**Jane Dorn:** Once the seed head, even if it's green ripe, what I call green ripe, it still got some green in it, but it's starting to look pretty plump and pretty ripe. Most plants, you can cut the seed head off at that stage and it'll go ahead and finish ripening in a paper sack. Don't use a plastic bag because you seal in moisture and you'll start mold.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Right.

**Jane Dorn:** Use a paper sack because that lets some air to circulate.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** I grow cayenne pepper and I do the same thing with my cayenne. I put it in a large paper sack and it's amazing how quickly they dry.

**Jeff Edwards:** We do live in a dry environment.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Yeah.

**Jane Dorn:** Yeah, you don't have to worry about dehydrating things. There's a special dehydrator around here.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Yeah, low humidity.

**Jane Dorn:** Yeah.

**Jeff Edwards:** Any other things you'd like to touch on, Jane, about natives as far as maybe some things that you think are good to plant, or good for folks to start out with? Something that might be a little easier, those types of things?

**Jane Dorn:** Well, one of the natives that's pretty widely available in nurseries are the blanket flowers or gaillardia. You'll often see them. There's been a lot of hybridization back and forth between the different species. There's several species in the Rocky Mountains and the horticulturalists have been hybridizing until you get some really pretty ones. They're available in many nurseries, they're very easy to grow, they're attractive, they bloom a long time. They will go to seed and spread all over your yard if you don't watch because they produce a lot of seeds. But they're easy to dig up if you've got one that you don't want, you don't know where you want it.

**Jeff Edwards:** An added benefit is pollinators really like them too.

**Jane Dorn:** They really do. Your bees and all your little bees and native bees as well as honey bees think those are a really good plant to enjoy and they get right in. One of the natives is overlooked a little bit in this area. I want to talk about a tree that I think is very underutilized in our landscape around here, and that's the hackberry. There's a few growing in Torrington, a few places. If I can mention, there's one just behind the Pinnacle Bank in downtown Torrington, very attractive tree growing as a street tree there. These are native to this eastern edge of Wyoming, [00:39:00] they're drought tolerant, they can grow in incredible alkaline conditions, they don't seem to mind freeze or cold or anything else.

They're not a slow or fast growing as a cottonwood, by any means, but they're a tree for the long term. They aren't subject to many pests. They do have pests that causes little tiny nipple galls on the leaves. Doesn't hurt the tree, doesn't hurt any other trees, it's just something you just want to put up with. When they get mature, then they produce a little fruit, that’s like a berry that the birds will eat. But they have a very interesting leaf that's attractive, and when they get older, their bark is very attractive too. I always tell people, "Those are tree you should look for and plant."

**Jeff Edwards:** So you mentioned the birds like to distribute them. Well, actually the birds like to eat them and then they distribute them. In my place, I have a hackberry nursery. [LAUGHTER]

**Jane Dorn:** Maybe you could go into business, selling hackberry.

**Jeff Edwards:** If people are interested, I can give them hackberry seedlings if they'd like because I am going through my landscaping and actually trying to control them because they're just taking over in places.

**Jane Dorn:** Well, that tells me you have just the ideal conditions for the tree.

**Jeff Edwards:** Yes, I do, and the birds that apparently like to distribute them. [LAUGHTER]

**Jerry Erschabeck:** My mom used to make a lot of jellies. Chokecherry, grape, whatever she could find. She picked a bunch of hackberries and I helped, but she was always putting it in the refrigerator and cooling it down. I came in one summer day, and people always say don't drink from the milk carton. Well, this was a gallon container and it was sugarless. Gosh. Dang. I learned my lesson not to drink out of a container. [LAUGHTER] That hackberry juice is terrible without a little sugar in it. [LAUGHTER]

**Jane Dorn:** I've never used it for jelly because I knew that ahead of time. Now, chokecherries are bad enough, if you drink straight chokecherry juice it will pucker you up. [LAUGHTER] It still makes good syrup. Hackberries, I always just figured I'd leave those for the birds. I wasn't that desperate for jelly.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** It was a bunch. We picked a bunch of berries and it was at a time when we were picking chokecherries, grape when we could find them, and mom would turn them into juice. That's one of the last times I did that. So Jane, have you had a lot of hackberries around your place?

**Jane Dorn:** Not so far. My tree is just getting big enough that it's going to start to fruit. It's about 15 years old, so it's just getting up to the fruiting stage. I have no surprise I have an incredible number of birds and I'm guessing that I will never get a berry because I have a lot of chokecherries and I have to fight to even get [00:42:00] chokecherries because the birds have all decided this is the place to live around here.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Oh, man.

**Jane Dorn:** I don't care because I encourage them.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Oh, yeah. It's fun to watch a bird, even with our mayday tree, the robins seemed to really like the fruit and will bring their young and gosh, they just eat, eat, eat, eat. Then of course, the sidewalk underneath them are blue.

**Jane Dorn:** Yeah.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** A lot of blue droppings. So that's where Jeff has seen that he's had a hackberry nursery develop on it's own. So that blanket flower, that gaillardia, it reminds me of a small sunflower, does it you?

**Jane Dorn:** Oh, yeah. It's related to the sunflowers and it grows a lot like they do. So like I said, it's one of those that’s tough, well adapted. There are other plants that I was thinking of. There are some of the purple and the white prairie clovers are available. They've used them a lot for reclamation work and the seed of those is readily available and they're attractive. They're not a big showy flower. You usually had to grow them in a mass, but you can easily grow them from seed and they're one of the legumes, so they fix nitrogen with their roots, which is always a good thing.

One of my favorite flowers, it isn't in bloom quite yet, but will be coming along, is what we call prairie blazing star. It's actually a composite, comes out in the late summer, and it's got a stalk that comes up and it's covered with purple flowers. You see it quite a little bit growing along the edges of the roads in the grass. It's one of those that is very tough, very resistant to drought. One of my favorites and it isn't that hard to find in the nurseries, are the spiderworts or the Tradescantia, they're the blue little three petals. They’re a liliy basically, and they're all over. They love the sand or the loose soil. Jeff says he has an abundance of those at his place too.

**Jeff Edwards:** Which ones are those, Jane? I'm sorry.

**Jane Dorn:** The ones that are right behind you, in your picture there. [OVERLAPPING]

**Jeff Edwards:** These are actually native transplants from- Up around behind our house is a native grassland prairie area. We pulled them out of there, and gave them a little water and fertilizer, and they grow greatly.

**Jane Dorn:** Jeff says they're grown there in partial shade on his place and they'll grow out in full sun too.

**Jeff Edwards:** These are also on Sheep Creek road if you would like to go drive and see [LAUGHTER] that. But go in the morning because by late afternoon, they might not be blooming. Is that correct, Jane?

**Jane Dorn:** They close up, yes, in the afternoon.

**Jeff Edwards:** Yeah.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Okay.

**Jeff Edwards:** You know, we're getting close to the end of the program. Is there anything that you'd like to talk about, Jerry?

**Jerry Erschabeck:** I think that [00:45:00] when you get out your rototiller for the last time. [LAUGHTER]

**Jeff Edwards:** Which apparently you've done.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Well, [LAUGHTER] no, not quite. I have one more event and then I think I'll be putting my rototiller up for the year.

**Jeff Edwards:** Okay.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Yeah.

**Jeff Edwards:** I love it that you consider it an event.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** [LAUGHTER] It is an event. It's just one of those deals that you have to do it every once in awhile. I'm going to start prepping some ground for possible wheat or some kind of a cover crop.

**Jeff Edwards:** Okay.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Trying to just keep some of those weeds down and [OVERLAPPING] the soil.

**Jeff Edwards:** Remember, we talked about oats.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** We did talk about oats.

**Jeff Edwards:** Because they won't live through the winter.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Yeah, they'll die down and create a mat.

**Jeff Edwards:** Yeah.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** I plan on throwing the oats or whatever I'm going to use, down on the ground and then rototill them in. [LAUGHTER] It's my planter, it's my rototiller. It's everything to me.

**Jeff Edwards:** It's your therapy.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Yeah, it’s my therapy. [LAUGHTER] There's a depth gauge of how deeply you can rototill, and you can set that, and so you just set it for two inches or whatever, and you plant whatever you got on the ground.

**Jeff Edwards:** Yeah. Should be perfect.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** Should be.

**Jeff Edwards:** Jane, we appreciate you being here today. Sorry that our schedules had a little bit of a conflict, but we were able to work it out in the end, I think. Is there anything that you would like to say before we close out today?

**Jane Dorn:** One more resource for our listeners, and this is available from the county Extension services and the University of Wyoming. It's a nice little spiral bound book called, Plants with Altitude, Regionally Native Plants for Wyoming Gardens is the subtitle. It's got pictures which everybody likes and the last time I looked, I think it was five dollars for a copy of it. I'm guessing you can get it from your extension agent. You can probably order it from the university. Barnyards and Backyards offer it, so it's available in lot of places.

**Jeff Edwards:** Yes. Thank you. I do know that there are still copies of that available. Once again, Jane, thanks for being our guest today. Always interesting to have you with us on our program. Jerry, good seeing you.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** As well you, Jeff.

**Jeff Edwards:** Make sure you be careful out there and we will be chatting again next week.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** All right, thank you so much.

**Jane Dorn:** Thanks, Jeff.

**Female Narrator:** [MUSIC] Thanks for listening. Catch next week's episode Tuesday at noon on Spotify or Extension’s Horticulture page.