**MALE\_1:** [00:00:00] Hey, Wyoming. Welcome to the Lawn and Garden podcast with the University of Wyoming Extension specialist Jeff Edwards and co-host Jerry Erschabeck. Originally aired on KGOS and KERM in Torrington. Join Jeff, Jerry, and all their special guests as they talk all things garden in the great State of Wyoming, from plant variants to weather events, to pesticides, and pollinators. Our Lawn and Garden podcast helps you improve your home garden as well as your small acreage. Let's welcome Jeff Edwards and Jerry Erschabeck. Happy gardening, folks.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Good morning, everybody. Welcome to the KGOS, KERM Lawn and Garden program, I'm Jeff Edwards of the University of Wyoming Extension along with Jerry Erschabeck. Good morning, Jerry. How are you?

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** Good morning. I'm doing really good. Thanks.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Good to see you.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** Nice to be seen.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** [LAUGHTER] Our guest today is Donna Hoffman, the horticulturist from Natrona County from UW Extension. Good morning, Donna. Good to have you here with us.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Good morning. It's always nice to join you guys.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Well, let's take a few moments and listen to our sponsors and we'll be back right after this. [MUSIC].

**FEMALE\_1:** Do you want to learn how to manage your money but you're not sure where to start? UW Extension is here to help.

**SHELBY HILL:** Hi. I'm Ms. Shelby Hill with the University of Wyoming Extension, and I'm so happy you joined me today. I'm going to be providing money tips to help you be less stressed and less scared about your money.

**FEMALE\_1:** Learn about building a budget, eligibility for stimulus checks, tax prep information and more. See your Facebook page at noon on Mondays for Michelle's Money Minutes.

**MALE\_2:** Hey, Wyoming, have a question? Ask an expert, go to ask.extension.org. ask an expert office one to one expert answer from cooperative extension university staff and volunteers with participating land grant institutions from across the United States to give you real time, real life answers to your hard questions. If you have a question, just ask, we're here to help.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Good morning once again, everybody. This is Jeff and Jerry with the KGOS, KERM Lawn and Garden program. As I mentioned before the break, our guest today is Donna Hoffman. Donna, after this last week or so, I think we're all ready for spring.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** That's right. We've got plenty of moisture, we're out of the drought scare, and I'm hoping that we keep it that way for the rest of spring now that we are [inaudible] spring.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Yeah, hopefully it doesn't turn into a flood scare.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Yeah, that would be nice.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** That would be the next thing that we have to worry about.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Right.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** But, Donna, wouldn't you agree what a great start to spring, putting that moisture pack into our fields, our trees, our gardens [00:03:00] getting them ready for, well, spring? Spring is tomorrow.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Yeah. Yes, it is.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** First day of spring. We've certainly been through a whirlwind of weather.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Yes, we have.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** It's the first day of spring for folks that have hoop houses and high tunnels. It's a good opportunity to get out there and maybe plant some cold crops, get that salad started. It's time. Looking at the snow on the ground, it doesn't seem like it, but good weather's coming.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** I think we will still have to shovel a pathway to our greenhouse. But I definitely [OVERLAPPING].

**JEFF EDWARDS:** In order to plant it?

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** In order to get in there and plant it, yes. But my husband and I have been talking about what kind of cold crops we should put in the ground.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** What are you thinking?

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** We have yet to be very successful in growing cabbage. Almost anybody can grow cabbage, but somehow I can't.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** What's wrong with you? [LAUGHTER]

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** I know. I think it's because we've been trying to grow it outdoors and maybe it just gets too hot before it gets started. We're going to try to put it in the two little raised beds we have in the greenhouse.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Are you going to start with germinated plants, pre-germinated plants or are you going to try [OVERLAPPING].

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** That's what I have done in the past. But I think we might start with some seed this year. If that doesn't work, we can still buy some plants.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** I talk about this on the program a lot. Do you grow Brussels sprout?

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** I have never grown Brussels sprouts. I see them in our community garden and they look beautiful and I enjoy Brussels sprouts here and there. They're not something I would eat all the time, but I like him every once in a while so they would be a fun thing to plant a couple of plants and get a few here and there.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** We had a guest last fall, I believe, Coleman Griffith who grows Brussel sprouts and I picked his brain a little bit, but I'm going to have to revisit that conversation because I would like to grow Brussels sprouts and see how well they do.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Would you grow them inside or would you grow them out, like where you have your asparagus?

**JEFF EDWARDS:** We may try a little both just to see what happens.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** I would think the shade that those trees in your gardening area would keep it cooler so they don't quite so hot.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** But they are a really long day crop. It's 110 days, I think, before they're ready to go. You get them [OVERLAPPING].

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** I usually don't see them until the very end of our garden season when everybody's thinking about harvesting their winter squash and pumpkins.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** We'll have to see what happens. What other things do you have going as we get excited for springtime and gardening?

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Well, I think we're also going to try a couple of broccoli and we talked about putting some more kale in the raised beds of the high tunnel. We've really enjoyed having kale in the freezer this year and quite a few soups with the kale. I tried [00:06:00] one the other day, but I screwed up the ratio of Italian sausage and it was way too spicy for my husband.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** [LAUGHTER] Mark just needs to expand his horizons a little bit.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Yes. [LAUGHTER] That's one way of looking at it.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Jerry, are you a kale consumer or a kale grower?

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** I have not been a kale grower. I think that that would probably be one of the things we should be doing. We tried that same soup recipe that you're talking about, but we used spinach instead, and that worked out pretty good. Spinach seems to wilt down a little farther than I think kale would. But in that same soup, you can buy the Italian sausage in regular spicy and extra spicy probably. We just buy the regular and add our own cayenne pepper if we want a little spice stuff.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Well, I decided to buy a package of each, and I bought some Italian sausage, I think it was mild, and then there was some that was sweet, and then a package of hot. I mixed the sweet and the hot, and I was supposed to cut the quantity in half because I used two packages, but it all went in the pot because I got distracted when I was putting it in the pot.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Mark was overwhelmed.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Oh, anyway, yeah. [LAUGHTER] He was not a fan of that soup so I'm not sure I'll be trying that soup recipe again. The other thing it had in it, it was butternut squash, and so nice combination. But anyway, it was not well received.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** That sounds like one of the recipes that Diane makes. The good stuff.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** Did you put the butternut squash in and cook it to a puree or did you leave it in chunks?

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Chunks.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** Chunks.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** The first time I've peeled a butternut squash because usually we bake them and just scoop the insides out. But anyway, I peeled it this time, so that was a new and different activity.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Since we seem to have time on our hands to watch excessive TV at this point in time, Jamie Oliver says you should just eat the skin. [LAUGHTER]

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** Okay.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** After it's baked, right? [LAUGHTER] For those of you who cannot see, Donna is making a horrid face. [LAUGHTER].

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** No I [OVERLAPPING] my tongue out

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** There's some people that won't even eat a potato skin. Yeah, I don't know about the skin of squash, but if it's cooked and that's where a lot of the vitamins are contained is on the outer surface, I could suggest you at least try it.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** If you bake it whole, the sugars peak out of the squash and build up on the skin so you should try them.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** If [00:09:00] you're cutting it up just like a little potato, you have very little skin to actually eat each bite.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Okay.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Don't waste that stuff.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Look's like I'll try it. [LAUGHTER] It seems leathery, thickened skin.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** Oh, yeah

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** I eat the skin of potatoes and I eat the entire sweet potato, but I don't know, I guess it's the shiny leathery texture.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Give it a try. That's all I'm saying.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** I guess those nutritionists [LAUGHTER]

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Which none of us are, so.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** No.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** It could be bad advice.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Yeah, right.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** Well let's talk about the growing of the spinach and/or of the kale. Do you buy plants for that? Or do you do your kale by seed?

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** We've always planet by seed and had pretty good success with those. I plant Kohlrabi and have no problem with that. But for some reason I haven't figured out what to do to get the cabbage to do something.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Our kale is usually by a start that we purchased at a greenhouse. Cabbages usually a start. Broccoli usually a start. If I remember correctly, I don't think we have any cold crops that we start from seed. We purchased them from greenhouses.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** I've purchased them Swiss Chard and I can tell for sure that's what it is because it's got the colorful midrib on it, but I've never purchased the others.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Jerry, what do you do?

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Broccoli I have I guess purchased

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** Oh, yeah. I purchase all of that stuff. I don't have the space to start those seedlings inside. I do fairly well with starting Marigolds and Xenia's and that sort of thing but at a much later date. I think it's very helpful to buy those because they are such a long day crop, you need to get them as quickly as you can and as long as you can. Donna the cabbage, the only thing I've found about a cabbage is that there's leaf-hoppers and minors and cabbage worms and you have to dust them every so often with some stuff.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Stuff.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** Stuff.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Stuff. [LAUGHTER]

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** Well, are we not supposed to say the name brand of stuff?

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Yes. It's okay to talk about stuff.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** All right.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** [inaudible] But no brand names?

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Yeah. Exactly.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** Oh, yeah. Okay, so and that's what we found is that and you want to maybe clean up the bottom leaves up just a little bit. We had a palette that was cut in half and so we put it up against the wood fence to the West and we opened up a little bit of dirt and stuck that in there and let that cabbage come up through the palate. The palette [00:12:00] kept the dirt from splashing up on the plant and that seemed to do pretty good.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** You did a little bit of vertical gardening, didn't you?

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** Well, the palate was flat on the ground.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Oh, okay. All right, [OVERLAPPING] so modified raised bed.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** Modified raised bed absolutely. Then you want to keep your moisture at a constant rate. I suggest a plastic gallon jug with a little bit of holes poked in the bottom of it. You bury that next to your plant and then fill up your plastic jug. Then you have constant water.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** You triggered a thought from Donna. There's a name for that, isn't there, Donna?

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Yeah. Since I do pottery, my pottery instructor's been talking about them. I think he had one drawn on the blackboard the other day and I'm trying to think of a name that he called it, but.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** It's using a terracotta pot next to your plants and you keep them filled up and the terracotta allows the moisture to get it out. But it.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** Oh, yeah.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Has a specific name and I cannot recall it. Does it start with an A?

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** The name I'm thinking of starts with a Y.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** [OVERLAPPING] Maybe that's what it is. We probably shouldn't play the name game [LAUGHTER].

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** That could take us all hour.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** But I never thought about terracotta because it would just seep out easily. You wouldn't have to poke a hole in it.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Yeah, through capillary action and it'll pull out through the yeah

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** Yeah, and I also put a moat around my cabbage so that, every once in a while I just fill up the moat as well.

**Jeff Edwards:** Good thinking. Keep things irrigated.

**Jerry Erschabeck:** We liked growing cabbage.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Yeah, I like the cabbage. When it's grown inside the high tunnel, the lower leaves first that are coming out that are the ones that are on the ground. They're plate size, they're just absolutely huge, 18-24 inches across, it seems like. Then the only thing that we really have to watch out for are the cabbage loopers. But if you're diligent, you can pick them off and not have to use some of that stuff [LAUGHTER]. Dust them with that stuff.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** Well, there's better stuff than others.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Correct.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** To use and so with the gardener's soap, would that be a good thing?

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Yeah, I think you could use horticultural oil on cabbages, although it might strip off some of the protective wax layer that is there naturally. I don't know. I use horticultural oil on the raspberries to prevent mites, but I've not applied it to cabbage.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** For those that are interested in pollinator gardens, which has gained a lot of popularity recently. Is there one of the cold crops [00:15:00] that maybe you could plant as a trap crop or as a sacrifice crop to the pest instead of using an insecticide?

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Potentially. But it might also draw insects and be potentially a worse problem in the end. But I don't know, is Canola in the cold crop? I think it may be related.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** I think it's in the mustard family, so close, yeah.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Yeah, so any of those mustardy type plants, if you allow them to bloom, you'll be pulling pollinators and maybe trap cropping some pests. I know Canola fields are notorious for having humongous aphid problems. They also have [OVERLAPPING].

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** [inaudible] experience with Canola is the first time I went to the International Master Gardener Conference. It was in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. I drove three master gardeners up, so there was four of us in the vehicle. There was just acres and acres and acres and acres of blue flowers and acres and acres and acres of the yellow flowers from the Canola.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Yeah, it's an interesting crop. It all vines together. [LAUGHTER] I can't imagine running a combined through it. [LAUGHTER] Anyhow, what else is on our agenda for gardening and springtime and making people feel good about being outside again?

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Well, I'm expecting now that we're actually into the spring season is starting to see the flowers coming up. I did see that the daffodil leaves are starting to poke their head up. I have not yet seen the snow drops and they're usually up sometime in February, but I think because we've been on the dry side, they haven't poked their heads up yet. But anytime, I think we're going to see those flowers poking their head up in the harbinger of spring.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** We've got daffodils and tulips coming up. They're starting to poke their heads up. Let me ask, do either of you dig and move your daffodils and your tulips or do you just leave them alone and let them naturalize?

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Leave them alone.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** Leave them alone?

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Mostly I leave them alone. But if we have a few places at the extension office in the gardens there where they were planted, really snug up to a little tiny shrub. Now that the shrub has matured, they're underneath the shrub, and I have relocated some of those so that they're a little more visible. I've also shared them because they have multiplied. We have moved some of them around, but for the most part, unless there's a reason to, I just leave them where they're at.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** Now, we've had tulips come up where we can't remember planting them there. Do [00:18:00] tulips [OVERLAPPING] migrate for lack of better words with air currents? Now we also have a brother-in-law that likes to sneak up here and plant stuff and so we've always blamed him.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Guerilla planting?

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Yeah, but he's not admitting anything, is he?

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** No, not at all.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** That's the best way to go. Just do something and don't fess up to it.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** Yeah [LAUGHTER] Wasn't me.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** I could get us off subjects, so don't let me forget to talk about guerrilla grafting.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Okay.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Planting stuff. I think that tulips do sometimes produce seed. You know, they'll develop those little pods at the tops of the stocks. I think that periodically we get seed, it has a successful pollination and then we get seed spread around a little bit, and they do come up, I think where we haven't planted them.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Is it too much of a stretch to think that maybe a squirrel would dig it up and bury it someplace else?

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** No. Not at all.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** That's not a stretch?

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Not a stretch at all. We have some squirrels at the extension office that keep planting some other things in the garden that I will be donating some trees to our fairgrounds to help with their tree barrier between the fairgrounds and the river here.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Jerry, always suspect the Jimmy's.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** Always. Well, I was suspecting my brother-in-law of it, I never gave it any thought to squirrel or bird or, anything else. I know the cats and the dogs leave the tulips alone. Deer happen to nip the tulip off at the top, won't they?

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Yeah, but that would probably prevent pollination from happening and [OVERLAPPING]. Yeah.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** Yeah.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Any enjoyment either.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** All right. My brother-in-law just tickles when we say that he's done something and he'd go, "That wasn't me." But it's a good thing. It's a nice thing to do to someone, plants something for them, like a tulip or a daffodil, and they go, "Where did this come from?"

**JEFF EDWARDS:** You know why he does that, Jerry, right? It's because you think he's done something, but you haven't found out what he's actually done.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** Yeah.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** You accuse him of one thing, but it's not the correct thing [LAUGHTER]

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Probably, we've a good fun though. Right?

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** Oh, yeah. Yeah. If you hate yellow, you'd hate to plant a whole bunch of daffodils for somebody and then they mow them over and go, "Gosh, dang yellow" [LAUGHTER]

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** If they [inaudible] keep coming back.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** A lot of wasted effort if [00:21:00] they spray them as well, I mean, you have to make sure that they're a plant lover and they're okay with yellow or daffodils. I love daffodils.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** One thing about daffodils is the deer do not eat them. They don't ever get interrupted in their blooming pattern.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Yeah. Well, hopefully when the snow disappears, we'll be able to start seeing more and more of those flowers coming up. Hey. Oh, I'm sorry to interrupt [OVERLAPPING] Let's take a little break and listen to our sponsors and we'll be back for the second half of our show.

**FEMALE\_2:** The University of Wyoming Extension and Sensible Nutrition Program share educational resources across Wyoming, and we want to hear from you, how do you find information on your favorite topics? What social media platforms do you use? What's the best way to get our resources into your hands? We want to know. Take our survey and earn an awesome multi-use kitchen tool and help us get the best information to you in the way you want it. [MUSIC]

**FEMALE\_3:** [MUSIC] Looking for the best way to keep up with all the news from University of Wyoming Extension, the College of Agriculture and Wyoming Ag Experiment Stations? The uwagnews.com website features real-time education, research and extension events, and feature stories from across the state. Bookmark uwagnews.com today and subscribe to our monthly email newsletter. Uwagnews.com, growing people, knowledge and communities.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Good morning, everybody. This is Jeff and Jerry for the KGOS KERM Lawn and Garden program, and we're talking with Donna Hoffman, a horticulturist from the Natrona County UW Extension. I don't know, we're just gearing up for spring. I think everybody is in the same boat ready to get back outside and be planting and doing things other than being trapped in the house. Just chatting about gardens and gardening. Before the program started, we were also talking about tree trimming and volunteer treat control and those types of things. Jerry, you wanted to talk a little bit about some techniques that have worked for you. Do you want to share with our listeners what you've shared with us earlier?

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** I'm not sure that I was the one talking about trees. Donna was that you?

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Well, we were talking about, I have a rationale if you cut down and you said you had had some successful one that was coming in a rosebush that you had [OVERLAPPING] your pointer so that I can take down the one in my neighbor's yard. I do have her permission and she and my husband were talking about it the other day. But if you have pointers to make sure that we don't get all kinds of little ones that come up after we take the big one down that'd be helpful.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** Yeah. I remember what we were talking about now and that was when you do cut down the [00:24:00] tree to paint the stump within 10 minutes with glyphosate, and by using that procedure, the trunk of the tree will actually try to seal up. If you let it go for an hour or two hours, that trunk of the tree will actually in that timeframe seal up and glaze over the top of that and you won't get any good poison down into the root. If you do that within the 10-minute timeframe, it works really, really well.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** [OVERLAPPING] I'm pretty sure that that's the only time I've ever heard good and poison used simultaneously [LAUGHTER]

**JEFF EDWARDS:** You don't have to paint the entire stump. You just need to paint the cambium layer, the bark layer, and then in about an inch from there. The center stump, it's hardwood or deadwood that there's no vascular system remaining there. You just have to paint the outside.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** You just put the cambium in the sapwood then, sounds like.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Yes.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** Yeah, but I sure would not put it on suckers, and thinking that you're going to kill the suckers and leave the tree because you're going to kill the tree as well.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Right. That product will translocate throughout the tree. It's better to trim off suckers, I guess. That's my strategy. Donna, you might have something else?

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** No, suckers need to come off.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Yeah, I have a suckers that are growing off of cottonwood trees, and the primary reason is that the roots are very close to the soil's surface. If I can add soil to that to try to prevent them from growing more after I trimmed them off, I'll do that. Otherwise, I try to remove that entire root because it's offending me [LAUGHTER]

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** There is a product on the market for suckers as well. Sucker stopper or sucker eliminator. I just had a question in the office for those. We used to live in a yard that had a white poplar.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Oh, notorious for suckers.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Yes. They're horrid, horrid trees as far as I'm concerned. But my husband got quite good at at trimming off the sucker and then spraying the little stub.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** The other reason that we would treat the stump is, if you don't, then that tree will want to produce new growth from that point, correct? Try to re-grow a new tree.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** It will send up latent buds in the cambium layer and start new growth. But if you are pruning a tree and you did what we call a topping cut anywhere up in the canopy and left a stub in, it would also send up suckers from that spot. It's from the cambium layer. It's very poorly attached to other wood and very prone to breaking. Any [00:27:00] suckering like that ends up being a liability on down the road because it's just very weakly attached to the rest of the tree and the root system and would easily fall over or break in a snowstorm like we just recently had.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** We've tried to save trees like that and it's never going to be the tree you've ever wanted. If the top of the tree is dead and dying and you cut it off and you get a sucker come up and go, "Hey, we will just use this as the tree." It's never going to be the tree that you ever wanted.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** I hate to admit it.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Trees are pretty resilient, but I never think that's a really great idea for the long-term.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Yeah, I have a mountain ash in our front yard that winter killed two years ago. I'm watching it to see if it will produce one main leader. It's now a mountain ash bush [LAUGHTER] I'm guessing that it's going to get yanked out.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Well, have you thought about removing some of the less desirable branches?

**JEFF EDWARDS:** I have.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** You have one.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** That was the intent but I can't see where there's anyone that is the dominant one. They're all pretty much the same size. We'll have to see what happens this year.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Maybe I need to come visit.

**Jeff Edwards:** Well, definitely.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** You can suppress some of them so that one gets the apical dominance and then remove those suppressed ones later on.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Okay. How would you do that? Just clip the tops?

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** You just have to pick one and then cut back to a growing point, probably that would grow away from the center of the tree. That way it's still photosynthesizing and still helping to develop taper on the one that you're choosing to be the strong central leader. Then after that main trunk gets some size to it and does some good photosynthesis and develops its own scaffold branches, you can remove those suckers from below.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Okay.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** But if it's just not going to work, then yeah, it is worth removing the tree and trying again.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Well, it's had a couple of years of wind blowing on it, so it's got to be stronger now than it was before. [LAUGHTER]

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** When you said your front yard, I was trying to think if you consider your east facing side your front yard or your west facing?

**JEFF EDWARDS:** West.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** West, okay. That makes sense.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Yeah. That's the side. Donna it since you've been here we've had to take out the honey locusts because of borers in them. Very disappointed with that I took out two of them last year and there will be a third one coming out this year.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** So you're going to get something like a Baroque so that it's there for [OVERLAPPING].

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Yeah. In that same spot we had two Baroques that we're coming up behind the honey locusts. [00:30:00] They're about 10 or 12 feet tall now.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Nice.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** But in the spots where the honey locust where I put in Colorado blue spruce. So they can be problems later on.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** Yeah.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Yeah. You're going to [inaudible] in those areas year out. [LAUGHTER] I hope you didn't plant them too close to your house.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** [OVERLAPPING] No, they're far enough away. They're far enough away. The mountain ash is the closest thing to the house.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** Is this a good time that you guys like to trim trees?

**JEFF EDWARDS:** I've already started and unfortunately I snapped my saw. [LAUGHTER]

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** Oh, boy.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Have since ordered and replaced that saw, so I'll be ready to go as soon as things warm up again.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** [OVERLAPPING] I actually have a tree that I planted maybe five years ago at the extension office and it's getting some size to it and it's had a cute little birds nest in it the last few years. But last year it had lots of competition for the central leader. I pruned all of them back except one because I didn't have a ladder out there when I was working on it. Just the other day I was walking past it and decided what I needed to do with that competing leader. I will need to get a ladder out, but it will only take one cut and then the central leader's ready for the coming growing season. But sometimes you do have to watch them for a little while and decide what you're going to do. You can always prune more, but you can't put it back if you cut too much. [LAUGHTER]

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** Do you like to have a mulch underneath a tree?

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Anything to keep grass away from the tree trunk, especially where you might have teenagers doing the mowing or those who are not necessarily people with green thumbs, but just run equipment if you can keep them away from the trunk of the tree. Absolutely. Mulch is much better.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Don't blame teenagers for everything, Donna. [LAUGHTER]

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Not everything. There are some really well educated gardeners as teenagers.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** There are some adults who can't drive a lawn mower. [LAUGHTER].

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** You're right. [LAUGHTER]

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** I don't want to get too close to that tree, but they'll put that lawn mower right around it and then fulcrum the back wheel around the tree and just pull off bark like crazy.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Great. All the way round.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** Jerry you need to keep Myrna way with your weed wacker too.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** She does really quite well with that weed wacker. But if you get the grass out of there next to the tree, it decreases the intent or it decreases the ability for someone to go, "Well, I can do that. Here, honey, hold my beer, watch this." [LAUGHTER]

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** [00:33:00] One year we did a tour up to the Bridger Plant Materials Station up in Bridger, Montana. They referred to grass growing around at least young trees as green debt because the grass would consume all the nutrients and the water near the soil surface because the roots aren't quite as deep as for trees. Then of course, somebody is always trying to minimize the grass around trees and damage happens to that all important cambium layer and then the tree is a goner. So grass around trees is really not a great idea. One of the studies that I've referred to over the years in extension is someone did a soil study and they studied the bacteria and the fungus and the microbes in forest soil and the bacteria and fungus in meadows or grassland soils, and they are very different microbiomes. So forests tend to have a lot more fungal organisms growing in them, and grassy areas or meadows tend to have a lot more bacteria growing in them. So the microbes that are colonizing the soil are just even different. So we really do need to keep on our home scale, the meadows and the forests separated.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Trees together and grasses together.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Yeah.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** Donna, have you seen those rubber mats? They sell them to put around a young tree so that it keeps the grass out.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** I've seen them, but never brought one home with me though.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** Okay. [LAUGHTER] What I've seen is people will dig just a small hole and then put one of those rubber mats around the tree to, "Kill the grass around the tree," wouldn't that harm those young roots of a tree?

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Well, you want to plant a tree at grade or just a little above. You don't want to dig down into it. I'm all about recycling, but I'm not sure that rubber around our trees is the best use of a recycled product. With mulch helps to create that fungal colony and help develop the mycorrhiza and the microbiome under the tree. So anything that's a wood product that you can get to stay around your trees, in my estimation, better than a rubber product. One thing you can do to maybe kill off grass or weeds under it is put down some layers of newspaper and then put the mulch on top or put down some cardboard and put the mulch on top. But I don't know that I would drag home some rubber to put in that particular location.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** Because if you're [00:36:00] digging, let's say we have a tree, maybe it's three or four years old, already in the ground and grass has grown up to it, actually digging the grass up, wouldn't that hurt some of those small feeder roots or is it more important to get that grass out of there?

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** It really is more important to get that grass out of there. I have a master gardener who's really gotten into the fruit trees and he bought a house 10 years ago, 12 years ago, near our downtown area, so it's in the tree area. But most of the trees in his yard are not real big, he has one big blue spruce, and then he had several crab apple trees. Then we were doing a walk around in his yard and look down at one point in time and we could see edging and the grass had filled in inside of the edging. So that edging was no longer edging anything other than it created a barrier for the grass or the line in it, but it was on both sides. Anyway, he took to digging that up and was pretty meticulous about being careful about the tree roots, so he didn't damage the tree roots and has finally gotten it back in one of them. But I was there just the other day and he did a yard call again. He's still needs to do the other of his two crab apples to get that grass out from under there. His kids are just getting to be teenagers and helping with some of the yard care. So that is some of the impetus for getting that grass out of there, but the trees will do much better without the competition from grass.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Yeah.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** What about the competition of flowers around the bottom of a tree?

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Well, forests do have lots of wild flowers that grow in them. There's that fine shrubs and lots of miscellaneous wild flowers, and so I like to put shade loving plants under trees.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** I got iris growing underneath my apple tree. It's only on half of it. My goal this year is to incircle my apple tree with iris.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Okay.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** How do you harvest your apples?

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** Step right over those iris. [LAUGHTER]

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** When do they bloom? Do they bloom all season?

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** Mostly in the spring.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Yeah. So there the flowers are gone by the time you're going to be harvesting. You could also insert a few other flowers so that you've got flowers there through the whole season, or you just do the iris and then you have the foliage underneath which looks like grass to a different texture, but it monocot tightly under the tree.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** Yeah. That's a good tip about using newspaper or cardboard [00:39:00] instead of a rubber product.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** That will break down organic matter as well and help develop the nutrients and the organic matter under the tree.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** Yeah, I like that idea. All right. Have any of you grown any little succulents in your high tunnels? That's a craze now is to buy little succulents and put them in the little terracotta pots and have a little succulent garden.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Leave them in somebody else's yard?

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** No. [LAUGHTER] Usually you grow them inside or you grow them vertically on a wall.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** We have an administrative assistant in our office that really enjoys succulents and she grows them at the office. One year, my parents had moved into her house. It was early when I started working for Extension and one particular bed was quite full of hens and chicks. I am not a fan of hens and chicks. Although over the years I've discovered there are some that have some interesting colors to them or there are some that grow some fibers that look like spider webs. I'm considering putting some of those on the sunnier side of our yard because where we live now is all sand. But anyway, I was quite proud of myself because I dug up all of my mom's, she didn't plant, they were just there, hens and chicks, and donated them to the Master Gardener Plant Sale.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** When I was a kid, I had a dog who liked to eat them. [LAUGHTER] He would dig them up and eat them.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Juicy.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** That was very nice of you to donate your hens and chicks. I've tried to do some companion planting with Iris and hens and chicks. So we'll see how that works. I just made the bed last year, but it's surprising that some people don't like hollyhocks.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Some people.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** Some people. So it's refreshing to hear that the hens and chicks isn't well-received in every neighborhood.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Now, there are some succulents that I do like. I have a jade plant and I have a string of pearls and some other. My husband has some aloe vera in the house, but they just don't excite me outside. Maybe they're not quite colorful enough unless you get to the unusual varieties.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** No cactus growing in your yard, Donna?

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Not in my yard.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Intentionally.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** I did meet a few of them up-close and personal at the ranch last summer. There are some yucca that are growing in the yard that I'd like to eliminate and I tried chemically. But my husband seems to be a fan of them.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Of yucca?

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Uh huh. [LAUGHTER]

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** They're good for burns. [LAUGHTER].

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** They [00:42:00] do really good in sandy soil, but I'm pretty sure this is a yucca that's been here since before the house was built in 1979.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Somebody said, "Oh, let's keep it."

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Yeah. They were they were parking ATVs and camper trailers in the area, it didn't hurt anything. So yeah, they're still here.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** To each their own.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Right.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** What a strong plant. I mean, if you can drive over it, if you can park on it, if you can ignore the crap out of it, what a strong plant. It deserves to live.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Bindweed.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** I think the chance that there was a trailer park near there, and the rain ran off right down on top of the plants and they benefited from something else square foot not getting any rain.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** Now, did you say it was a yucca or aloe vera?

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Outside it's a yucca. We have an aloe vera [OVERLAPPING]

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** Because aloe vera is good for burns, not yucca.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Yucca has a very, very sharp tip on it. I do know that the Native Americans used to use the fibers from yucca to do some of their stitching. The fiber lasted as well as sinew did, so it had some purpose.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** Easier to catch as well.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Yeah.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Easier to what Jerry?

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** Easier to catch. A yucca is easier to catch than an animal because sinew comes from an animal

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** They better hope that they had hunters that were better than that though, life depended upon hunting.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** I had a friend with a t-shirt that said, 'A vegetarian. What it means to be a bad hunter.' [LAUGHTER]

**Donna Hoffman:** Right

**Jeff Edwards:** Whatever it takes, you know?

**Donna Hoffman:** Right.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** That's right. I think we're probably getting close to ending our time but, unfortunately, just to remind everybody, it's springtime. Probably a good time to start plants indoors and getting ready to move them out in a couple of months. Other thoughts that you might have to encourage folks to get out and do some gardening and maybe some possible cleanup, Donna?

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** I was going to quickly mention guerilla grafting. A couple of us read an article about grafting fruit bearing varieties on to crabapple trees. The master gardener who has those two crabapple trees I was talking about the other day, he's ordered quite a few fruit bearing varieties, and he's planning to attach them to public trees that don't really bear fruit that's on the edible side. So that's hoping to use some of those public spaces to make fruit available to those who might not otherwise have access to some of it.

**Jeff Edwards:** [00:45:00] Well, that's an interesting idea.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** Donna, if you're doing a crabapple as the main root-stock, what other kinds of things could you graft to that?

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Any kind of apple will graft onto a crabapple.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Will pears?

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** I don't think they do really well. I think it has to be the same species.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** I know that in some of these catalogs we can see the, what do they call it? The fruit?

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Cocktail tree.

**Jeff Edwards:** The fruit cocktail tree, yeah. [LAUGHTER] I don't know that any of those ever survived more than a couple of years. [LAUGHTER]

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** I think they sell them. I don't know that people harvest from them.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Yeah. I don't know that I've ever talked to anybody that has said, "Oh, you want to come see my fruit cocktail tree? [LAUGHTER]

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** This particular master gardener may have fruit cocktail in his yard by the time he's all said and done. But he's successful with pears in his yard so far and quite successful with apples. He does have one cherry. I don't know that he's got any apricots, but anyway. He's got a great vine going.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** That's good.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** Quite a bit of it.

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** That seems to be what happens when you buy a can of fruit cocktail, you only have one cherry in the whole can. [LAUGHTER].

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Only one half of a slice of a cherry [LAUGHTER].

**JERRY ERSCHABECK:** I see something red. [LAUGHTER]

**JEFF EDWARDS:** Exactly. Hey, I think on that note, it is time.

**DONNA HOFFMAN:** We are out of time.

**JEFF EDWARDS:** We are out of time. [LAUGHTER] Donna, thank you for being our guest today. Always good to have you on the radio with us. Jerry, good to see you. Thank you for all of our listeners who put up with us and eventually we will be able to get outside and start talking about stuff that actually make sense. [LAUGHTER] Thank you all very much and we'll see you next month.

**MALE\_3:** [MUSIC] You've been listening to Morning Garden with the University of Wyoming Extension specialist, Jeff Edwards and co-host Jerry Erschabeck. As the snow melt and the sun breaks, the University of Wyoming Extension has many upcoming virtual and hybrid learning programs available to you. Listen each week for details of new events and how to make your gardens flourish. Good day and happy gardening.