

Hey Wyoming, welcome to the Lawn and Garden podcast with University Extension Specialist Jeff Edwards and his co-host Jerry Erschabeck. Originally aired on KGOS and KERM in Torrington. Join Jeff, Jerry and all of their special guests as they talk all things Wyoming garden, from plant variants to weather events, to pesticides, and the pollinators. Our lawn and garden podcast helps you improve your home garden and give you small age. Good day and happy gardening.

Hey, good morning everybody. This is Jeff Edwards and Jerry Erschabeck for the KERM Lawn and Garden program. Good morning, Jerry.

Good morning, Jeff. How are you doing?

I'm great. How are you today?

Really good.

Uh, fantastic. [LAUGHTER] Our guest today is Joyce Evans, the mayor of Fort Laramie. What else do I need to let people know about you, Joyce?

That's probably enough.[LAUGHTER].Good morning, Jeff.

We're glad to have you here. And before we hop into our show, let's take a few minutes and listen to our sponsors.

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All right. Good morning again. This is Jeff Edwards and Jerry Erschabeck for the KERM Lawn and Garden program along with Joyce Evans. Glad you're here today, Joyce. And you had a whole list of things that you wanted to talk about. So let's just begin. Where would you like to start?

Well, let's start with our park.

Okay.

Our memorial park- we call- also known as North Park. [LAUGHTER] We have fascinating names in Fort Laramie.

Do you have a street address for that?

It's on Laramie [LAUGHTER] between Laramie and Otis. [LAUGHTER].

Not to put you on the spot, but, you know.

Do I know my map, checking my geog- geographical knowledge, yes. All right. So we have a preschool and the town of Fort Laramie, and it's made up of children ages three to five. And they spend a lot of time learning about how plants grow and what we do with plants.

Awesome.

And they were kind enough to plant all of the flowers for our pa- memorial park.

Okay.

Which we have a display of military flags. And then we plant those and flowers around- around the flags. We have flowerbeds that we plant every year, so they started all of our flowers this year.

When did you start those flowers?

They started them a little earlier than we needed to, because.

They were excited about it weren't, they?

They were and they had to get those out so they could get the vegetable crop in for the greenhouse, which is their real motive here.

Yes.

We decided that we would use height as an interest causer in the flower beds. So we got some taller flowers and then used our shorter marigolds around the outside. And we're going to have a very interesting, a variegated height display this year.

What are some of the taller things that you guys grow?

We use giant marigolds and then we use some dahlias I believe that were taller or Zinnias, we use tall Zinnias. And, um, unfortunately we neglected certain off before we put them in the ground. So, our taller plants are ground seekers at the moment, [LAUGHTER] but very pretty blooming can cross, will prop up there and weak little stems and we'll have some height. And if not, we will just have flat beds as we usually do.

But you already have flowers blooming in your city beds?

We do. And we also went with some rude Beckia of different colors because we wanted something a little bit different. And we put some Sweet Williams in because we were hoping to get some perennials going. We have two Echinacea plants that the preschoolers planted about three years ago that are coming back. And we have some Sweet Williams and some Dianthus that are coming back. So we thought we would try to imitate that and- and get that into some beds, but they also look a little ill.

Can you- can you describe what a Rutabaga looks like.

A Rutabaga is a- a- it looks like a sunflower, but it has, uh, a more of a cone in the center.

Okay.

And these- these don't have a real pronounced column like a cone flower. But they are- they look like sunflowers only they're pinks and lavenders and whites and those different colors.

So are they different than Echinacea?

They are different than Echinacea. They don't develop the spiny central cone.

Okay.

But they're also very water. There is xerophytic, they don't take a lot of water. That's something we wanted to concentrate on more on our flowerbeds is use less water.

And we talked a little bit about zero escaping letters- zero escaping last week, which doesn't mean concrete or gravel. It just means being water wise and using plants that are more efficient at using water.

Right. And that's- that's our concept, is to use less water in the irrigation process, not have to water as frequently, water deeply and not as frequently. And so we're trying to get that started in those flower beds as well as in our native plant garden which is the next thing we need to talk about. Last year, we put in a native plant garden. We designed it ourselves. The community came together and volunteers built all the forms, poured the concrete. We were donated a water wagon from the Fort Historical Society, that is gorgeous. It's a beautiful work of art as well as a utilitarian vehicle. And so it is with the Conestoga wagon or I guess it's the Studebaker wagon that we have in front of town hall.

Okay.

So we built the prairie garden around those two wagons.

So are you storing water in the water wagon?

We are not. It has been a few years before it would not be a plant water [LAUGHTER] but we did, uh, the Lions Club helped and the Historical Society or not the Historical

Society, the Fort Laramie auxiliary, helped to purchase some good linseed oil and we linseed the entire wagon and it is not watertight any longer. I believe it was a 1898 to 1912 model.

Okay.

It was actually used to water streets.

Keep the dust down?

Yeah, yeah. Or fire suppressant, depression, I'm sure but it had a pump mounted on the back so it doesn't have any way for the water to come out of the bottom of the wagon, it comes out at the top. But it's really a fascinating piece of machinery.

Interesting, yeah,.

So you can come look at it.

And designed it to keep in store water. I know even in the wooden, uh, planter boxes, if I don't keep those nice and wet, they swell and keep everything inside. I'm wondering if the water wagon is much like that.

It is. It's built like a barrel with staves and the whole barrel concept, it's just on its side.

So are you inviting people to Fort Laramie to- to see this?

I'm inviting people. We were very fortunate in that we got a grant from the Wyoming State Forestry Department and that allowed us to put in a lot of native plants. Jane and Bob Dorne consulted with us to help decide which plants were native to this area.

Jane was our guest last week.

Oh, hood. Well, she and Bob were able to create a list of plants that were native here before settlement and before farming. And we were able to find a greenhouse in Sheridan that piney- piney island native plants. That starts the natives and contracts out to like the highway department and the Park Service and places like right.

Reclamation Okay.

But she had a wide assortment of the plants that we needed and we purchased through our grant, we purchased the plants and then the owner of the tiny island, um, doubled our order.

Oh, fantastic.

And just donated the second half of the order. So we had a lot of native plants, we have trees, shrubs, um, a lot of woody plants, we have a lot of grasses, we have flowering plants. And I was thrilled that almost all of them came back this year. Ones

I thought had died after we planted them, we had a group of volunteers. We had 18 people ages five to 75 who came and planted those plants. We had labeled all of the plants. Then we took nails with survey tape on it and wrote the name of the plant where we wanted it and put them in the ground and people came and grabbed their plants and put those plants in the ground. Then it's all mulched with pea gravel.

Okay.

So,

It's, uh, very water wise uses very little water. I have a few that take a little bit more water so I watered them this spring other than that we have not watered all. And we have plants ready to flower. The- the blue flux is flowering right now.

Excellent.

We have blanket flower that's budded, we have, um, prairie sunflowers, we have just- just a myriad of plants. Then some of them are food-producing. And what we've done is we've labeled all of the plants with their scientific names, their common names. And we've tried to put something about the- either Native American or pioneer use of every plant.

Okay.

And sometimes current use on every label. So you can come and read about a plant, see what it is and see what it's used for.

So if- if folks come out to visit, are they welcomed to walk through? Or, I mean, it's open.

Absolutely.

It's open space.

It's open space. We actually have benches place-

Okay.

-where you can sit and admire if you want to. And there are sidewalks so you can walk on the sidewalks we just ask you don't walk in the pea gravel.

Okay.

Because some of those little guys are still- they're hidden.

Yeah. They're still trying.

But they're all marked and you can- you can come stop and walk- walk through, take a look at what we have.

Self-guided tour.

Self-guided tour.

You know we'd- we've talked about the water park being a destination spot. So now we can have another destination spot in the same town.

We have a story walk that runs around the water park and comes across the street and comes- leads up to the pre- native plant garden. So if you just follow the story walk and read all the pages of the story and get to the end, if you turn around you're in the native plant garden.

Oh, how fun is that?

Yeah, and then if it's- if it's warm you can just go into the water park.

You can. Yes.

Is the water park open?

It is. It opened Memorial Day weekend.

Oh, fun. And I'm sure it's been- being used.

I've heard shrieks and screams [LAUGHTER] I'm quite sure the children are taking advantage of it.

Well, that's great. So if- if folks who are listening need something to do and want a little adventure, try Fort Laramie and- and wander around. Checkout Fort Laramie.

That's right. And when you get to the native plant garden you will also be at the greenhouse.

Yes. You want to talk about the greenhouse?

I'd love to talk about the greenhouse. [LAUGHTER] You may never stop me talking about the greenhouse. [LAUGHTER] Again, our preschool planted all of the plants that are growing in the greenhouse. They started them- the ones that they had to start ahead of time they started in the classroom. They have grow lights in the classroom and the children watch the plants grow. And then they actually take the plants out and plant them in the greenhouse or outside of the greenhouse. Jeff did a nice job of designing our greenhouse so we have indoor and outdoor beds. We have a central bed that has a dwarf cherry tree in it.

How is it doing?

It is doing really well but there are lots of suckers. I need to-

Okay.

-cut a little suckers off but it's-

I was- I was hopeful that it would survive the winter-

It did.

-and it'll be okay. Excellent.

It's been a little slowly thing out, but I think it's- it's going to be happy in there.

Good.

And we have little plants planted around that in that bed. And then we have, oh, all sorts of garden vegetables. The lettuce and the spinach is ready to harvest if anyone from Fort Laramie or anywhere wants to come and do a little harvesting. We'll do that. We have peas, we have cabbage, we have cauliflower, we have- oh every-

Tomatoes?

-we -oh, [LAUGHTER] we do have some tomatoes. We are known to plant a few more tomatoes than necessary and we try to restrain ourselves this year.

Can we talk about last year?

Yes, we can.

A little bit. So, uh, I encouraged them when I- when we set everything up, I said don't over-plant the greenhouse. Don't over plant the dome. [LAUGHTER] And what did they do? [LAUGHTER]

Perhaps we over-planted the dome. [LAUGHTER]

It's hard when things start coming up it's hard not to over-plant.

They're little.

Well, that's true. And there's a lot of space in there. So you think, well, we can shove more plants in here. But the thing is- is, er, the week before the Quilt Show last year, I believe, um, I tried to wander inside the geodesic dome and I think I got in the door.

I think that was safe to say, yes. [LAUGHTER]

It was so overgrown with tomato plants and other things.

Mostly tomatoes.

Yeah.

We- we, um, really try to rash in the tomato plants this year, but we- last year we did end up needing a machete to get through it [LAUGHTER] and we did trim everything back so you could walk through. Which we should have done a lot earlier because the tomato plants were standard a little bit then.

Yeah.

But, um, yes, and we decided not to plant cucumbers inside this year.

Okay. Good.

We planted our cucumbers outside. We had them trellised inside and they were beautiful last year but it was hard to- to [OVERLAPPING] harvest from the back of the trellis. [LAUGHTER]

Yeah.

And we had some gymnastics trying to get things harvested. So yeah, we've- we've cut back, we've- we've used good sense we think.

So if there is produce and people are there, are they allowed to sample?

Absolutely. The-

Okay.

-the purpose of the greenhouse is a community greenhouse. And anyone who needs food, wants food, likes food, we hope that's everyone, can come to the greenhouse and pick anything they want at anytime.

Oh, nice.

There are- a few items might be labeled to belong to the preschool such as pumpkins we grew last year-

Okay.

-specifically for a project in- with the preschoolers, and those will be labeled. But everything else is free for the taking. And we encourage people to come and pick anything they want.

Okay.

You know, I think that's such a great program for- for children to learn how to garden, learn where their food comes from, learn that, hey, a seed will produce this thing. Uh, I've always been so amazed that a seed can produce well, pumpkins, of course. [LAUGHTER] Uh, but such unique things and just from a little tiny seed. And, you know, those kids will remember that for the rest of their lives and hopefully make them gardeners.

I think it will make them vegetable eaters too.

Yeah.

And that's.

Or perhaps that's- that's a great idea.

Uh, the- the children planted plants that don't need pollination this winter. And they

had lettuce, spinach, kale, carrots, beets, and- and also herbs planted. And they made their own snack on a weekly basis.

Oh, that's fun.

That was inside-

And when you walk into-

That wasn't outside.

Yes, that was all inside.

You're not heated in the green house.

No- no. This was all inside in the classroom. But when you walk into a classroom and they're having snack, and you hear a little four-year-old voice say, teacher, may I have more salad, please? [LAUGHTER] You say, yes, mission accomplished. [LAUGHTER]

May I have more?

Yes, and it was very polite, may I have more salad please?

Wow, that's awesome.

And they did have salads. They made kale soup, they- they cooked with their produce, they learned how to pick it, they learned how it grows. And we- I ended up with a planter of kale because school was out and they don't need it anymore. So-

Yeah.

-it's amazing what those kids learned. Their mothers got Mother's Day gifts of an herb garden. We had seeds donated. And I think something that's really important to think about is Laura said she used about \$200 worth of seeds for all the flowers, all the greenhouse, all the projects during the classroom. And we figured out if we had purchased those plants that was about \$1,800-

Oh, yeah.

-worth of plants.

Sure.

The preschoolers started and grew and learned from in their programs. So I think that's just a real important thing to keep in mind this day and age with inflation and food insecurity and that sort of thing is a little bit of seed goes along way. And those- those kids have learned that.

Yeah.

We planted a lot of cantaloupe this year. And they have way too many seeds in the package. And mother thought she wanted to plant the package. And gee whiz. [LAUGHTER] You know, when you're planting even five to a hill, you know, and- and take out the weakest too and that sort of thing, that's still a lot of cantaloupe.

That's a lot of cantaloupe.

Yeah.

That's a cantaloupe farm.

You know, uh-

So hopefully, we're going to have some cantaloupe too.

Yeah, I love cantaloupe and if I put them in a hill I wouldn't thin them out. But that's just me. But I plant all mine in a row anyway.

In a row?

Yeah.

We'd always plant our pumpkins in a row, uh, just so we can till down the center of it and-

Oh, huh.

-remove weeds and that sort of thing until such a time that it was basketball size- the plant was basketball size. And then you have to stop. Then it has to become, uh, manual weeding. Yeah.

Well, you know, it's a good thing that gardens and gardening can be very forgiving, right?

Yes.

Uh, and that comes back to your amazement at what can be produced from a seed.

Absolutely.

So, uh, you know, to me I think gardening and being an artist are kind of similar because like, okay, that didn't work I guess I'll try something different next week. [LAUGHTER] So that painting is done I can paint something else. Um, I think we're getting the sign that oh, well, we're not- we're not getting the sign but I think it's a good time to take a break and listen to our sponsors. [MUSIC]

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Now back to the Learn and Garden Podcast.

Okay, welcome back to the KERM Lawn and Garden Program. I'm Jeff Edwards, along with Jerry Erschabeck, and our guest today is Joyce Evans. Glad to have you here. We have been talking, spending time talking about things happening at uh, Fort Laramie, particularly around the Community Center. Is it also the businesses-business office for the city?

It is also the city offices, yes.

Okay. All right. Very good. Um, I do know that there are more plans for that area. Do you wanna talk about more things?

Of course. I would love to talk about more things in Fort Laramie.

Okay. [LAUGHTER]

So we have had- we- when we moved into the old school building, we had a lot of weeds, we had a lot of, um, unkempt areas, and we've gradually been improving those. The native plant garden is right in front of Town Hall or on the east side of Town Hall. But after we got the greenhouse and the native plant garden in we looked at the rest of the weed patch out there and decided, "Well, this isn't very attractive." So we decided to put as much sod as we could get grants for around the greenhouse and eventually we're clear to the north side of the- the area there. And lo and behold, we were able to find another grant this year, which we have been awarded verbally, um, and we have- don't have the money in hand yet, but we are very excited to have received the main street grant to sod the entire area up to the road. So we have a lot of sod to put in. We have a lot of prep work to do, but the good thing is there was a sprinkler system installed that had never been used and didn't have a water source. We're going to be able to hook that up either to town water or to a well that we're trying to rehab.

Oh, okay,

So that will be untreated water and we won't be using treated water on it. And we'll be able to put sod in that entire area, level it up and make it useful to the community. Will be- it could be an outdoor venue for weddings. It could be-

A place to picnic.

A place to picnic. We do- we already have a picnic table there. We hope to get some musical sculptures to put in that area.

Oh, yeah. That- those are- those little musical sculpture parks are kind of fun.

I think that will be a lot of fun. We have one instrument ordered but hopefully we'll be able to get some more in the future.

Okay.

If more grants come up. And it's also a place that we could conceivably have music- um, music, yes, we could have music or we could have movies in the park.

Oh, fun.

And have some seating outside and project movies onto the side of the building. So we're pretty excited about getting that- that part of the- the property rehabbed enough that the public can use it and have some fun up there and maybe use it for community space.

And it's amazing, all of this has been funded by grants.

Everything has been funded by grants. We've had some labor went in from the town, but most of it has been grants. Well, all of the expenditures have been grants, and most of the work has been done by volunteers from the community.

That's fantastic.

Which makes it so important because those volunteers then feel that they- they can come back and use that.

Sure.

And we have generations using the splash pad. We have grandmas and grandpas sitting around on the benches that were donated, and kids running through the sprinkler. We have kids using the story walk, which was donated by the library- the County Library system. Um, we've just- we've been fortunate to be able to access that- those opportunities from various places.

Yeah.

We've- we've had grants from the first lady. We've had grants from the state forestry. We've had Main Street.

[inaudible 00:25:16]

We have- we have had lots of grants. [LAUGHTER] Thank you for adding that one.

Yes.

Yes, that's the greenhouse grant. [LAUGHTER] And we've had- been able to have people come and help do the manual labor, which is really, really important. Another thing that I haven't mentioned that we need to put- to bring to light is we are also working on South Park now.

Okay.

We have two parks in Fort Laramie. South Park is been significantly neglected. Last winter we put in a half court basketball.

That's where- that's right across the railroad.

It's- it's across the railroad tracks, and it's in a lovely treed area that we put in a half court basketball courts for kids to play basketball, shoot baskets. And we are putting in more playground equipment down there through a wreck board grant.

Oh, nice.

We'll be adding a lot of equipment and it's not so much a playground equipment as it is more of a relay where there will be various stations kids can go to and play on different pieces of equipment. We're hoping to use some donated materials to make some flower boxes down there. Get some flowers planted down there, get that beautified a little bit more. We offer free camping down there if people wanna do dry camping there's an area for RVs. So we wanna make that an attractive area too.

Linda and I have camped at that park.

Have you?

Yeah, we have. And we thought it was just very peaceful and very nice. And, you know, everybody goes to the bed at about 9:30 to 10 o'clock [LAUGHTER] and that's kind of where we're at.

That's kind of Fort Laramie. [LAUGHTER]

Sleepy little town. Okay, so if folks have questions or would like to talk to us today, 532-2158 is the phone number. Oh, we usually end up getting phone calls within the last two minutes, but if we can do that a little bit ahead of time today we might be able to time things [LAUGHTER] a little bit better. Um, but, uh, thank you, Joyce for the update. I think it's fantastic that things are happening in Fort Laramie. Uh, it just takes a couple of driven individuals I think to get things going.

And doesn't it surprise you who volunteers?

It does and yet it's just gratifying that people are willing to volunteer for their community. And it's- it's great to see people coming out and using those spaces because that's what it's all about. That's what it's for.

You know, there's been a lot of, um, I don't know of shifting population, are you seeing more people move to Fort Laramie in the last couple of years than-

We have had, um, a turnover of population. We have a lot of people who've been there a long time and families that have been there forever. And we're- we're happy about that, we're proud about that. But yes, we have had some more younger families moving in and taking advantage of the amenities that are there for young families, which I think is what keeps the community alive.

Yeah.

And a lot of families will have younger members, or younger genera- generations moving back. And that's- that's really important too because we wanna keep that continuity in history going too.

Okay.

And- and didn't- didn't Fort Laramie receive some sort of water quality? Not- not to delivery, but the water quality, wasn't Fort Laramie water really good?

At one time it won a- an informal poll of taste test. [LAUGHTER] I- and-

How does that panel work?

I'm not sure.

Vote, yes.

[LAUGHTER] Possibly, I'm not sure. That was before my time. But yes, we did have an award. But we do have ongoing sewer and water projects, so the water is safe. The water is well considered in the town. We- we work hard to keep our delivery system going. We've re- revamped both of our wells last summer, so we are still going on.

Do you still have town flood your irrigation?

We do- we do.

My- my aunt and uncle, Leo and Catherine Erschabeck lived right across the street from the school, and they always talked about flood irrigating their lawn, and am I going, "Good, gosh. Doesn't that drowned it?" "Oh, no, no, no, Jerry. That's just like irrigating out of the field". And so they had deep, deep, deep water. And-

You could grow rice.

God. [LAUGHTER]

Well, you couldn't grow rice is because the water only comes once a week and the soil is very sandy.

Oh, of course.

So it works really well in Fort Laramie and we do have- the water isn't for everyone in town. We don't have a conveyance system to everyone. That's a project that's on

the burners too, is trying to get that so that anyone who wants water can get it and anyone who does not want water doesn't have their property threatened by that water. Because some people have low garages, and shops, and things, and if you flood or irrigated that property it would damage the property.

Sure.

So, you know, people want what they want and they don't want what they don't want. So we're trying to make it so that it works for everyone and you can change your mind if you want water or not. But right now we still have flooded irrigating for some properties.

Yeah, if your basement flooded, you probably wouldn't want it so much.

Exactly- exactly. [LAUGHTER] And you don't really want it running through your garage I've discovered it's not the best thing for stucco. [LAUGHTER]

You know, you go, Joyce, you got a phone call, [LAUGHTER] line five, six, and seven. There's a whole lot of water running somewhere.

I get a few on those, yes. But yeah, it's- it's a really good system of watering and is very inexpensive. You buy per lot, pay once a year, and it's 25 buck- or 50 bucks, \$25 a lot.

Oh, wow.

So that's your seasonal bill and then you don't have to pay.

That's another reason to move to Fort Laramie.

It is- it is, but make [LAUGHTER] sure you get one that's sort of lot that served by a ditch. [LAUGHTER] But anyway, that's something we're- we're trying to work on too. I've been- that's been on the burner for a long time to try to it. I think the conservation district is gonna help us out with that.

Oh, good.

With some engineering and get that project going.

And it's well-known that Fort Laramie has a lot of leeks- leeks.

[LAUGHTER] We don't grow leeks very often.

Yeah, not so much. [LAUGHTER]

But we're working on it.

We are, okay, yeah.

Yeah- yeah, very good. Excellent.

So it's difficult to get grants or is it- has it been for relatively easy?

It's been amazingly easy in- once we learned where to look and people referred us. Thank you, Jeff.

You're welcome. [LAUGHTER]

There- there is some money out there. It's usually not in huge amounts, but there are still granting agencies out there and you have to be responsible in your use of the money. You have to be responsible in your reporting and- what we've been doing is keeping a pictorial record of everything-

Oh, yeah.

-we've done and therefore we have a before and after picture, and we have pictures of citizens actually being involved with the projects. And that is that really impresses grantors and I think- I think it's our responsibility to do that. To-

Yeah, and part of your reporting, I mean, they appreciate the fact that you've documented what it looked like beforehand and the end result, so yeah.

And I think it's useful for grantors to know how their money is being used.

Right.

And it makes them more likely to go ahead and offer more grants.

Sure.

But, yeah. And some are more complicated than others. It just depends on the agency and you know, federal monies are a little bit harder to get, but right now, there are still some people that are doing grants.

Do you and Laura do a little happy dance when you get the notification that you received another grant?

We do, and then we wanna make sure that we have the before pictures. [LAUGHTER] We're starting on the reports the minute we get the money.

That's awesome. [LAUGHTER]

That's a- that's a great thing to do is- is take those pictures. So we've done projects in the past we go, "We should have really photographed this." And you go, "Yeah." You know, and everybody has a cell phone now.

Right.

And the ability to send a picture is pretty easy.

You just have to remember to do it.

Yeah.

That's the-

You do and well, we do have good pictures of the splash pad when the herd of cows came through and broke up the pipe after we had it put in, and that sort of thing. We got pictures of that.

Oh, so, wait a minute, there have been setbacks?

Oh, there have been a few.

[LAUGHTER] And we took pictures of setbacks too because, I mean, that's- that's part of the process and that makes it a human story. And I think that's what- that's what granters appreciate. And- and we appreciate the people that give us the money. It's not like they owe us anything really.

Sure.

It's a gift and we appreciate it.

Yeah.

So we do try to be responsible about it.

Do you have a personal garden?

I am cutting back on my personal garden this year.

Okay.

I've planted some raised beds. I have- I have a few tomatoes. I have- I use EarthBoxes. And they are very nice because they don't need constant watering. But-

So explain an EarthBox?

Oh, an EarthBox is a system that, um, brings water up from the bottom of the box. You put water in a tube, it fills the bottom of the box. It, um, you can renew it every year. It uses dol- it uses dolomite and, um, fertilizer and you plant the plants in this box. It cover it with a plastic cover and water into the tube. And during the growing season, you probably water once or twice a week, and then when the plants start to produce, it's- frequently, you have to water every day because it's hot.

Sure.

But they-

Interesting.

-they really- if fertilizes the plants, they grow really well. And they're contained, you don't have weeds or anything like that. So it's a good patio system.

Okay. Kind of, um, nearly hydroponic, kind of, sort of?

No, they're in plant, they're in soil.

They're in soil. Okay. All right.

Right. But the- the soil wicks the water up from the bottom. There's a- a tray underneath the- a screen that keeps the plants from- the dirt from going down into the water and then the roots can just go down in there.

You- you mean the soil?

The soil.

I'm sorry. Soil. [LAUGHTER] I sometimes have been known to use dirt.

Oh. Oh, yes. [LAUGHTER].

And turn it into soil.

Okay. Very good.

With microorganisms. [LAUGHTER]

I just happen to know someone that has a whole bunch of lick tubs.

Yes?

Yeah. And they're- they're free and they're at my house. And anyone else who would like to have any of those blue lick tubs, I have as- I have a-

Wait a minute.

-a plethora of-

Myrna has told you you need to reduce your inventory. [LAUGHTER]

Put that on the- put that on the agenda again, would you? [LAUGHTER]

I have seen wonderful gardens grown in lick tubs.

Yeah.

I- I put my tomatoes in them. I do that, but I haven't grown other things in them. But I've seen lovely gardens with celery and everything in those gardens.

We're growing zucchini in ours.

That's a good idea.

Yeah.

That's a good idea.

Yellow and green.

So you know there's some research that, um, uh, different colored backgrounds help tomato plants produce more. So would you look for a red lick tub for a tomato plant? Would- would it matter?

Would it matter what music you- you played for as well?

Yeah. You know, I think the color blue might, um, uh, uh, deter things like thrips. I don't know.

What about roly-pollies?

No.

I think here is your master's thesis or your PhD dissertation. Yes- yes. [LAUGHTER]

Yeah, there you go.

Or some good- good [OVERLAPPING]

What- what color of lick tub do you choose and how did they grow or deter insects?

So here is the question. Do you drill holes in the bottom of your lick tubs?

I do.

I do too.

And then, you know, I for some reason I thought, you know, just a side hole would be the best and then have a little reservoir. But that keeps roots, feet wet, and they don't like that.

No.

And so yeah, it's- it's a hole in the bottom. Let that water flow.

That's right.

I have a-

I have replaced it. [LAUGHTER]

I had a- we have a- a little garden swing out in the garden and- and an old, uh, rubberized mat. We pull that up just to move it and clean it off and all the ants underneath it. I mean, little black ants and their eggs were up on top.

Yeah.

And they're roly-pollies. [LAUGHTER]

Oh, here we go.

Jack, you talked about waging war on roly-pollies.

Yeah. I've been struggling with roly-pollies. Um-

What are they doing to you?

Pill bugs, sowbugs, roly-pollies, they're all kind of very closely related. They're the-

The centipede, millipede.

No- no, they're, um, they're actually the only terrestrial crustacean.

Oh, crab.

So yeah, crab, lobster. Uh, we should-

We should try to-

-try should be eating them like [OVERLAPPING]

Garlic. [OVERLAPPING]

We'll bring you some. [LAUGHTER]

No, it will.

Yeah, exactly. Uh, maybe they'd be like popcorn. I don't know. [LAUGHTER]

No, you need that little cracker. [LAUGHTER]

I need to hard pass.

Yeah. It depends on how desperate we get for eating things. Um, but I've been- roly-pollies are traditionally they tried as feeders. Meaning that they feed on com- composted dead material. Well, after they reproduce a lot in that composted dead material, then they might also cause problems in raised beds and gardens and those types of things. So I've been doing a little research on how to, um, manage them, uh, a little bit more effectively. Joyce is a tender-hearted person and, uh, um, prefers to, uh, manage things correctly instead of just killing them. [LAUGHTER]

Well, I believe there's an important role for most things in nature.

I agree. But when they become a problem, they must be managed.

You need to look for a natural predator. [LAUGHTER]

Or- or, uh, or like tin foil around your- the bottom of your tomato plants.

Uh, yeah. I've seen that you can put up barriers, kinda like what we've talked about for the, uh, uh, cutworm. Uh, you can put barriers around your plants because they have been gird- they have been girdling my tomatoes, which irritates me. Uh, I- I was- we planted our tomatoes. We have six in our high tunnel and two of them were

just kinda hanging out. They weren't growing any, they weren't doing anything. So I finally took a look at them and I could see where they'd been girdled right at the soil line. Uh, so I pushed the dirt- the soil, excuse me, the soil [LAUGHTER] up higher above the girdled area, and then, uh, they're- they're starting to come out of it and- and do a little better.

So did your tomatoes root above that- that injury?

They're working- they're working on it. Yes.

It will take them a while?

Yeah. Yeah.

So a friend of mine gave me some grapevines- Concord grapevines.

Yeah. And so just put them in the ground?

No. Just put them in a bucket of water and they'll root at the junctions and they haven't rooted. But the- the flowers and the leaves, I mean, they're even budding.

They're out.

But so would you just put it in the ground [OVERLAPPING] or wait for the roots?

I- I would add some [OVERLAPPING] willow rooting hormone that you can purchase or go out and get some willow and the tender shoots of a new willow and just kinda cut the- the bark on that and drop the bark and everything into your- your water that your grapevines are in, and that- that's also a rooting hormone.

Really?

The natural version.

The natural version.

Never heard of that. Willow?

Willow.

Joyce is full of interesting things like that.

Yeah, just- just full of them. [LAUGHTER]

I've been called full of it before. [LAUGHTER]

Do you have all of your garden planted, Jerry?

All of it that we're going to plant this year, yes.

Okay.

Yes. So I think we finished up with the, ah, cantaloupe last Friday and they're not up yet, but it's only been a week.

Well, and the soil temperature has been a little cooler because of the nice rainstorm we got last weekend.

Been raining and I think the next five days is least a 30-50 percent chance of- of rains. It's lovely that we can go out in the morning and do some stuff and then kick back and watch it rain in the afternoon. Yeah. [LAUGHTER]

Enjoy the outside area. [OVERLAPPING] Exactly. Yeah. Ah, ah, we- I think we finished planting, let's see, must have been Tuesday. We got all of our melons in the ground and our winter squash and those types of things. But, uh, soil temperature dropped back to 50s and I was reading the packet on the melons to Diane, it says soil temperature needs to be 80, well, if we wait around for that length of time-

It'll be in July.

It'll be late September freeze time when we're waiting for melons to be ready. So we just needed to get them in the ground.

Right, it's tricky. Well, I harvested my last year's carrots.

Oh.

I winter my carrots over in the bed.

Sure.

And mulch it deeply and I pulled the last of the mulch off and I'd harvested three-quarters of them during the winter.

Okay.

But I had a quarter of my bed left and I harvested carrots and I ended up cooking and freezing carrots because I had so many.

What did you mulch with?

Straw.

Straw?

Wheat straw.

And you said mulch deeply, are you talking like six feet? [LAUGHTER]

I'm talking probably when it's fresh, probably two feet.

Okay.

And then I just let the snow fall on it and pull the mulch off and did carrots all winter

long.

Now I've heard a bale of hay works pretty good.

A bale of hay probably would, but it's pretty heavy and you'd have to move it out of the snow. [LAUGHTER] So I break it up and just put straw over it.

Okay.

But I mulch my- my garlic and everything at all at the same time and so I have everything mulched.

We mulched- we mulched our pumpkins with- with straw. Ah, we had a guy grind some wheat straw and we spread it all out and we were so happy and so proud of ourselves until the wheat started growing.

[LAUGHTER] Do you harvest your wheat? Because I do. I keep it in a little jar and then I hand grind it.

Oh nice.

So I harvest my wheat.

Okay.

Go out when the wind is blowing and flail it in there and [LAUGHTER] watch the husks blow away.

We could- we could but we've never done that.

You can almost flail it every day.

You could. You Practically could, yes. You could, you could.

Yeah because of the wind. All right, good stuff. Ah, anything going on in the county that we need to be aware of or letting folks know of? [OVERLAPPING]

Yeah, peony is starting to open up. I mean, we have, ah, I don't know five or six peony and- and they're really showing a lot of color and- and one is about a day or two from opening. We had some friends from St. Louis drop by and they go, wow, you're really behind. [LAUGHTER] What do you mean?

Well, yeah, we are.

So she says the- all of our peony is open and- and, you know, still growing and- and still flowering.

Yeah.

Way open flowers. And I'm like, oh well we'll, we're getting to it. We're getting around to it.

Your favorite flower, the irises.

Irises are blooming.

They're beautiful for sure.

And for those of you who are interested, this was a little tidbit that I sent you that you didn't respond to. The iris show is on this weekend in, ah, Scott's bluff.

Oh, I didn't know that.

Both Saturday and Sunday at the extension office. I can't remember the hours off top of my head, but, um, I'm going to say 10:00-2:00, I could be wrong. But if you're interested in iris, there are iris on display, there are iris for sale.

Yeah. Myrna and I went to that, ah, several years ago, purchased a- a nice little booklet on iris. Um, got to see a tremendous amount of color and- and variation of iris. They're just fantastic.

Yeah, Diane and I went. Oh boy, it's probably been 12-14 years ago now, but it was a really good- it was a really good show. It was interesting, um, good thing to do.

I was cleaning out my bookcase and found that iris booklet.

Oh, you did?

And re-read it and I'm like, oh huh-

I learned something. [LAUGHTER]

I've forgotten some of these things. But yeah, Iris, I think are one of my favorite flowers because they're so easy. They say that if you're going to garden, if you're going to grow a flower, the easiest starter flower is an iris.

Um? Just because you can chuck it out on the ground and it'll grow. [LAUGHTER]

Oh, God, my brother- my brother dug some iris and then he gave it to my other brother and he took it down to Texas and stored it in his garage in Austin [LAUGHTER] for, I don't know-

A year-and-a-half?

Three or four or five months.

Okay.

And he says, maybe I ought to- what the heck's this? And it was all dried up. And he says, now just dig a hole and throw it in. And they grew [LAUGHTER] and- and blossomed.

Tenacious little things.

Oh yeah. They're- they're easy- easy- easy-peasy.

Little- little hydration.

Yeah. So I've started taking pictures of my iris so that I kinda know where they're at and what colors are blooming.

How are you identifying where they're at?

Well, I kinda know my yard.

Yeah.

And so I usually take a picture along with the apple tree.

Sure.

So I have iris planted under there and-

Okay.

I have iris in my front flower bed and if I take a picture from the north to the south or south to north, I have a reference point. So-

We also talked about writing on the leaves in the past.

We had?

Have we given up that idea? [LAUGHTER]

Yeah, we have given that up. [LAUGHTER]

It's next year, you never know. [LAUGHTER]

You never know about next year. But I- I planted some iris and- and I put- and this is lovely blue iris. I'm like, well the other side of the tree needs some, so I plant in some there and his coming up yellow, so it doesn't really matter what colors are in your iris bed. But some-

Yellow will always show up. [LAUGHTER]

Always show up. But some people like to, you know, have a monochromatic little area of color. And, uh, I'm not so much. I like the multiple colors.

You'd like to have a lot of variety?

Varieties.

Excellent.

Yeah.

Very good.

And it seems as if it's keeping my apple tree soil a little more moist.

Oh, okay.

So hopefully it'll- it'll translate into it. But this year, we didn't ask you about the frost. Did frost kick you or did it get you or not?

Well, I had been out of the country so I didn't have anything planted, but it did get some of the leaves on the trees.

Yeah.

Some of our trees.

I've mentioned this, but my bur oaks really got whacked by the frost. Ah, they are growing out of it. They're putting out new leaves but-

Probably isn't real good for them.

Probably not. Let's not hope that something else bad happens this year.

Oh, and remember- remember I- I kinda was watching this, um, it was a black walnut tree that had blown over us. We had a- do they call it a burst?

Microburst.

Microburst.

Microburst. And it blew this tree over and it was- it was two blocks south of my old office and, um, they had just let it grow because it was still viable and growing. And I drove past it just the other day, it was gone.

Oh, man.

And I go, oh, man, and hey, kudos to you guys for keeping that tree as long as you did. What a- what a remarkable conversation piece that was, and it was growing, but the tree was laying on its side and, uh, and fruiting and- and putting out black walnuts. And I looked over just, you know, because I've drove down that street and looked over and I was like, hey, it's gone. [LAUGHTER] How could they? Well, you know, things change.

They do.

Hey, well, I see that we're really close to parting ways this week. Any final thoughts, Joyce?

No, thank you for the opportunity to tout Fort Laramie and all our green things and our water features and everything that we do there, so come and see us.

Yeah, I'll just remind everybody that it's- they are doing great things in Fort Laramie. So if you find yourself with a little extra time, take a little drive and- and go check things out?

Yeah. Look Fort, the town.

That's right.

Yeah.

That's right.

Yeah. Jerry, anything left for the day?

I think I've spent all my- my peonies and all iris and all my notes. So yeah, um, we haven't really talked about the weather.

No. I don't know if we have time to talk about the weather.

Oh, it's gonna get better. [LAUGHTER]

All right everybody, thank you for joining us again this week for the KERM Lawn and Garden program. And quickly, do you know how our guest is next week, Jerry?

Yes. Quickly, I do. Robert- Roberta Luke.

Roberta Luke. Okay. All right. So we'll see you all next week.

[MUSIC] You've been listening to Lawn and Garden with University of Wyoming Extension Specialist, Jeff Edwards and co-host Jerry Erschabeck, presented by KGOS and KERM Radio in Torrington and by the University of Wyoming Extension where we're growing people, knowledge, and communities by extending the land-grant mission across the state of Wyoming. Good day and happy gardening.