



The Sage Gardener

Park County Master Gardeners

March 2020

Park County, Wyoming

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Table of Contents

President's Corner	2
Spring Calendar	3
Notes from the Plant World	4
March Grow Great Gardens Programs	7
April Brown Bag Programs	8
Winter Watering	9
Vanilla - Herb or Spice	10

President's Corner

Kathy Clarkson

As I reflect on taking on the role of President I feel deep gratitude to those who have preceded me. They left records and tools that have helped me escape the feeling of driving blind. I thank them so much. I will also use my understanding of what it is to be a Master Gardener to instruct me.

I learn from others, my gardening experience, reading and attending seminars. Giving good advice requires me to broaden my techniques as an educator, to learn how learning develops, and then implementing those principles.

I am also a librarian. I endeavor to know the wealth of information resources. That includes taking time to organize those resources for quick access if needed. I can promptly and confidently guide others to that science-based bounty. I will also renew my knowledge as current information is available.

Finally, I strive to be a good person and give back to the community. This is a practice that my father and mother instilled in me from a youthful age. That means I lead, follow or stay out of the way, as appropriate to the circumstances. I attend meetings of the communities to which I belong or read the minutes. I search for ways to contribute to them, even minor details, such as logging my volunteer time. I join others that have a passion for gardening and I invite others to accompany me.

Spring Calendar

March

2—PCMG meeting 7 p.m., PC Courthouse, Cody EOC room

4—Grow Great Gardens, 12 Noon – 1pm, Powell Library

Linda Pettengill, PCMG, [Seed Starting](#)

11—Grow Great Gardens, 12 Noon -1p.m., Powell Library

Denise Fink, PCMG, [Revising Your Landscape](#)

18—Grow Great Gardens, 12 Noon - 1p.m. Powell Library

Nancy Ryan, PCMG, [Iris](#)

25—Grow Great Gardens, 12 Noon - 1p.m., Powell Library

Josh Pomeroy, Blue Ribbon Tree Service, [New Tree Plantings. Think Native.](#)

April

1—Brown Bag Seminar—12 noon—1p.m., Powell Library

Christy Flemming, Big Horn National Recreation Area

[Native flowers at our Visitors' Center](#)

6—PCMG meeting 7 p.m., Fairground, Powell, Heart Mountain Rm

8—Brown Bag Seminar—12 noon-1 p.m., Powell Library

Colby Shafer, Northwest College - [Spring Turf Management](#)

15—Brown Bag Seminar—12 noon-1 p.m., Powell Library

Kathleen Clarkson, PCMG - [Plants that Heal](#)

17-18 – [Wyoming Master Gardener 2020 State Convention](#)

“Your Earth, My Earth, Our Earth – Gardening Roots us Together

Casper College, Casper, WY

22—Brown Bag Seminar—12 noon-1 p.m., Powell Library

Mary Vogel, PCMG - [Grow the Best Potatoes & Carrots](#)

29—Brown Bag Seminar—12 noon-1 p.m., Powell Library

Joyce Johnston, PCMG - [The Right Perennial in the Right Place](#)

May

4—PCMG meeting 7 p.m., PC Courthouse, Cody EOC room

16— Spring Expo and Plant Sale, Park County Fairgrounds

Notes from the Plant World

Assembled by Sandy Frost

The **Wyoming Apple Project** final report and information is available on the web. Cultivars, genetics, distribution of species and geography are all discussed. The work is the result of Jonathan Magby's Master's thesis at the University of Wyoming. Find his work at

<https://malusdomestica.wixsite.com/wyomingappleproject>



LED Grow Lights Evaluated by Oklahoma State Extension

Some of us are thinking about how to get seeds started in late winter or early spring. Detailed information about new LED grow lights is available from Oklahoma Extension. Go to

<https://extension.okstate.edu/factsheets/led-grow-lights-for-plant-production.html>

Botanists scour aging orchards for apples

Gillian Flaccus Billings Gazette, Dec. 1, 2019

PULLMAN, Wash. — The apple tree stands alone near the top of a steep hill, wind whipping through its branches as a perfect sunset paints its leaves a vibrant gold. It has been there for more than a century, and there is no hint that the tree or its apples are anything out of the ordinary. But this scraggly specimen produces the Arkansas Beauty, a so-called heritage fruit long believed to be extinct until amateur botanists in the Pacific Northwest tracked it down three years ago.

It is one of 13 long-lost apple varieties rediscovered by a pair of retirees in the remote canyons, wind-swept fields and hidden ravines of what was once the Oregon Territory.

E.J. Brandt and David Benscoter, who together form the non-profit Lost Apple Project, log countless hours and hundreds of miles in trucks, on all-terrain vehicles and on foot to find orchards planted by settlers as they pushed west more than a century ago.

The two are racing against time to preserve a slice of homesteader history. The apple trees are old, and many are dying. Others are being ripped out for more wheat fields or housing

developments for a growing population.

North America one had 17,000 named varieties of domesticated apples but only about 4,000 remain. Benscoter, who retired in 2006 after a career as an FBI agent and an IRS criminal investigator, pursues leads on lost apples with the same zeal he applied to his criminal cases. In one instance he found county fair records that listed winners for every apple variety growing in Whitman County, Washington, from 1900 to 1910 – an invaluable treasure map.

.....Brandt, a Vietnam veteran and passionate historian, last year found a homestead near Troy, Idaho, by matching names on receipts from a nursery ledger with old property maps. The project includes finding trees, identifying cultivars, taking cuttings, and growing out new trees.

Clones help famous elm tree live on

David Sharp, Billings Gazette, Jan. 20, 2020

Yarmouth, Maine – A massive elm tree nicknamed Herbie is long gone, but it is going to live on, thanks to cloned trees that are being made available to the public. At 110 feet and more than 200 years,

Herbie was the tallest and oldest elm in New England and survived 14 bouts of Dutch elm



disease because of the devotion of his centenarian caretaker, Frank Knight, the late tree warden of Yarmouth, Maine. The duo became famous after Knight spent half of his life caring for the tree, which he referred to as “an old friend.” Knight realized he couldn’t save the town’s elms as they succumbed by the hundreds to Dutch elm disease. So he focused his efforts on one of them: Herbie.

Over five decades Knight oversaw selective pruning of Herbie’s diseased limbs, and applications of insecticides and fungicides. The pair became well known, both in Yarmouth and beyond, thanks to international news coverage.

The tree was cut down Jan 19, 2010 as the 101 year old Knight looked on. Knight died two years later. But before Herbie was chopped down, the Elm Research Institute in New Hampshire worked with Knight to collect some cuttings from Herbie to preserve the tree’s legacy with clones.

The hope is that Herbie’s descendants will have some resistance to Dutch elm disease. But that remains to be seen. “Like many cancer patients, he was a survivor.” The years-long effort has created 1,500 mini Herbies. The goal is to create many more – hundreds of thousands said John Hansel, 95-year-old founder of the Elm Research Institute based in Keene,

Researchers began clipping leaves from Herbie years before his demise. Researchers planted about 5,000 clippings in pots before finally getting a single tree that took root. From that there are now 1,500 trees. That represents a critical mass to begin creating them in even larger numbers.



Western Ag Research Station explores small fruit opportunities

Reagan Colver, MSU News Service (Billings Gazette Dec 7, 2019)

Thanks to a recent grant from the Montana Department of Agriculture, one of MSU's agricultural research centers will deepen its explorations of small fruits and berries as options for Montana producers and consumers. The Western Agricultural Research Center in Corvallis.....focuses on horticultural and fruit-related research.....

The project will focus on several varieties of cold-tolerant berries including haskaps, which are native to parts of Russia and Japan; domesticated saskatoons, also known as service berries, which are native to North America; aronia, which is known for its medicinal qualities; and sour cherries, which are popular for their juice.

The scope of the project includes studying production, storage, marketing, taste, and consumer preferences. The final part of the project will be a partnership with MSU Extension in Ravalli County and the brand-new Montana Berry Growers Association. There will be a workshop held in April 2

ORCHIDS Close to Home in Montana

Cameron Evans, (Billings Gazette, Feb 2, 2020)

"For about 25 years Brenda Oviatt and Bill Nerison have been involved with what they like to call one of Missoula's best kept secrets. The couple run Botanica Ltd., an appointment-only business off South Third Street containing more than 8,000 plants and about 500 species of orchids.."

They have grown orchids for 37 years and focused on saving rare species.



GROW GREAT GARDENS!

Brown Bag Seminars

Powell Branch Library
Wednesdays, 12 Noon to 12:50 p.m.

March 4 – Seed Starting

Linda Pettengill, Park County Master Gardener

March 11 – Revising Your Landscape

Denise Fink, Park County Master Gardener

March 18 – Iris

Nancy Ryan, Park County Master Gardener

March 25 – New Tree Plantings – think Native

Josh Pomeroy, Blue Ribbon Tree Service

For more information contact
Master Gardeners at (307) 754-8836

The University of Wyoming is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution.



Brown Bag Seminars

Powell Library

Wednesdays 12 noon to 12:50 p.m.

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| April 1 | Native Flowering Plants at our Visitors Center
Christy Flemming, Park Ranger,
Big Horn National Recreation Area |
| 8 | Spring Turf Care
Colby Shafer, Northwest College |
| 15 | Plants That Heal
Katherine Clarkson, Park County Master Gardener |
| 22 | Grow Prize-winning Potatoes and Carrots
Mary Vogel, Park County Master Gardener |
| 29 | The Right Perennial in the Right Place
Joyce Johnston, Park County Master Gardener |

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EXTENSION

Winter Watering

Bobbie Holder, Park County Horticulturist

At this time of the year most gardeners are thinking about what they are going to grow in the upcoming season, not about what they have growing now. They are looking at garden seed catalogs not what is already planted outside. With the dry winter we are having, neglecting the trees, shrubs, and perennials now could result in loss this spring. The solution is WATER.

Winter water is essential in Wyoming when the temps have been in the 40's there is no snow pack and the wind has been blowing 40 miles per hour (OK maybe a little bit of an exaggeration, say 20 miles per hour) things need water. The wind and sun pull all the limited moisture out of the soil, and exposed plant tissue. Even plants that are dormant are still alive and need enough moisture to keep tissue alive and be able to produce new tissue in the spring. Without enough moisture for new tissue you will have no or limited new leaves or flowers. Most plants start producing new tissue long before you see buds start to develop.

When prioritizing what you will water first, think about anything that had been in the ground for 2 years or under. If you are debating winter water because you will have to use city water and it isn't cheap, remember how much you paid for the plants in the first place and how much time you have invested in what your time is worth. Then if that amount is less than water costs you can let them die and replace them. If however, you paid good money and spent hours of time on them already, it is much cheaper to keep the ones already planted alive with a little extra water in the winter.

The next thing to water after newly planted things are spruce. Spruce is an evergreen that like water. After newly planted and spruce look for plants that are exposed to direct winter winds. If it has been a long dry spell everything, even the lawn, will appreciate a drink.

Vanilla (*Vanilla planifolia*)– **Herb or Spice?**

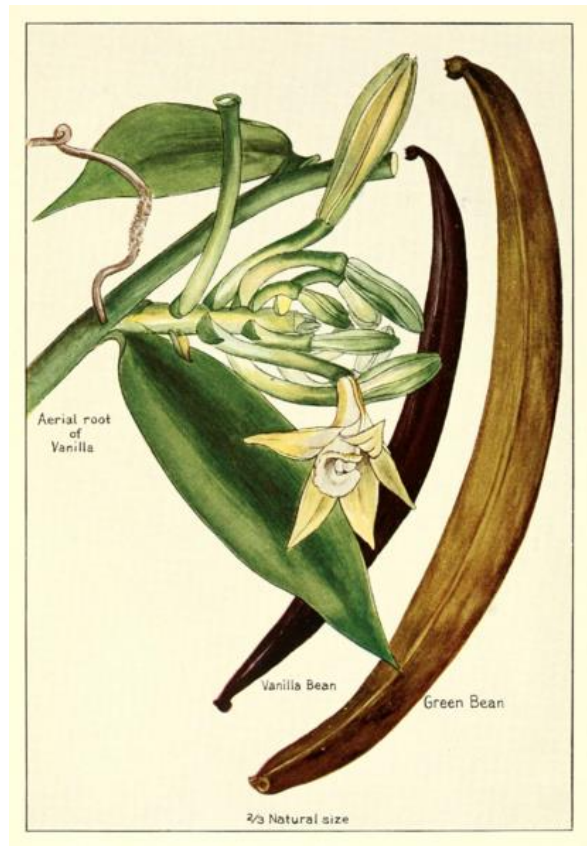
Sandy Frost, PC Master Gardener

Many of our flavorings come from plants. Herbs and spices come from different parts of plants. Herbs come from leaves, flowers, or stems. Spices come from seed, fruit, root, or bark. That wonderful ingredient, vanilla, we use in our breakfast coffeecakes and desserts is a spice. Vanilla extract is made from the fruit of the vanilla orchid, its pod, or bean, so we call vanilla a spice.

Vanilla planifolia, a tropical orchid vine, is commercially grown in Mexico, Madagascar, Tahiti, Java, and Bali. It blooms when it is about 3 years old and 10 feet tall. It is a member of the orchid family, the largest family of flowering plants with over 25,000 species in the wild along with thousands of hybrids. Vanilla produces the only edible fruit in the entire orchid family. It is the most labor intensive agricultural produce in the world.

Thomas Jefferson is credited with bringing vanilla to the US. In 1789 when he returned from France he found that no one knew of vanilla. He wrote his French attache and requested some vanilla pods.

Vanilla pods command a high price due to scarce supplies. Their value leads to thefts from fields which are hard to guard and from processors. There are international agreements on Fair Trade policies and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) which deal with vanilla. This is only a snippet of fascinating information about vanilla.





Happy Birthday !

March—Rhonda Faulkner

April—Suzanne Larsen

May—Joyce Johnston

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