

## Hello Master Gardeners!

As we move into another new year and reflect on what did and didn't work last year, perhaps some New Year's resolutions should be made. (Although it seems resolutions are easy to make and even easier to break!) But that's what makes gardening so great, we can all resolve to do better next year.

This last year was challenging, as Nebraska's seasons so often seem to be, with an inevitable spring freeze following a week of 60-70 degree temps in March, nice spring rains, a hot and dry summer, and finally a lot of September rains. I even picked snapdragons to have a bouquet for Thanksgiving! It seemed like the hard frost would never come. After it did finally frost, November saw a lot of garden cleanup.



Enjoy your winter down time and the beauty that a fresh snow brings, along with all the seed catalogs that come in the mail. Spring will be here before you know it! —Betty Hamata

### Master Gardener Recognition

**Tuesday, March 18 from 7-9 p.m.**  
**First State Bank, 1005 E. 23rd, Fremont**

Join us Tuesday evening, March 18th for an evening of education and recognition of Master Gardeners from Dodge and surrounding counties, when new 2008 MG Interns will be introduced.

Also as part of the Creating a Horticulture Paradise program series, Vaughn Hammond, UNL Extension Technologist, will be presenting his program entitled "Small Fruit Selections for Eastern Nebraska."

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### New Master Gardener Training

**Feb. 28 - Mar. 27**  
**9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.**

Please invite friends or family who might be interested in participating.

Information and an application can be found at:  
[Extensionhorticulture.unl.edu/mg/dodge.shtml](http://Extensionhorticulture.unl.edu/mg/dodge.shtml)

*View the class schedule on  
Page 11.*

# From The Garden To The Table

## Anise

By Bonnie Parrish

Each year as the holidays approach, my thoughts go immediately to anise. To me, there's something about anise that says CHRISTMAS. I always have to make hard anise candy and Springerle.

Springerle is a traditional cookie of Bavaria and Austria. The name comes from an old German dialect and means "little knight" or "jumping horse". Springerle are white, anise-flavored cookies, made from a simple egg-flour-sugar dough. Usually rectangular in shape, they have a picture or design stamped on top, imprinted with a specially carved rolling pin or flat mold. After the cookies are baked, the designs are sometimes enhanced with edible food colors.

Springerle molds were usually carved from wood or made of clay or metal. Biblical scenes were some of the earliest images portrayed in Springerle

and were used to educate those who couldn't read or write.

Historians trace these cookies back to the Julfest, a midwinter celebration of pagan Germanic tribes. Julfest ceremonies included sacrificing of animals to the gods, in hope that such offerings would bring a mild winter and an early spring. Poor people who could not afford to kill any of their animals gave token sacrifices in the form of animal-shaped breads and cookies.

Vestiges of these pagan practices survive in the baking of shaped-and-stamped German Christmas Cookies

such as Lebkuchen, Spekulatius, Frankfurter Brenten, and Springerle.

Aniseed, *Pimpinella anisum*, a member of the carrot family, comes from the Middle East and has become native to the countries of the Mediterranean. Aniseed is one of the oldest spices and is also used medicinally. The spice contains essential oils and other ingredients which have a strong seasoning action.

Aniseed is harvested from July to January, but shipped all year round. Fresh aniseeds are gray-green in color.

## Springerle

4 eggs  
1 lb. (4 cups) powdered sugar, sifted  
20 drops anise oil  
4 cups sifted all-purpose flour  
1 t. soda  
Crushed Anise Seed

With electric mixer, beat eggs till light. Gradually add sugar; continue beating on high speed 15 minutes or till mixture is like soft meringue. Add anise oil. Sift together flour and soda; blend into mixture on low speed. Cover bowl tightly with aluminum foil and let stand for 15 minutes for easier handling.

Divide dough in thirds. On lightly floured surface, roll each piece in an 8-inch square, a little more than ¼ inch thick. Let stand 1 minute.

Dust springerle rolling pin or mold lightly with flour; roll or press hard enough to make a clear design. With sharp knife, cut the cookies apart. Place on lightly floured surface; cover with a towel and let stand overnight.

Grease cookie sheets and sprinkle each with 1 ½ to 2 teaspoons crushed anise seed. Brush underside of each cookie very lightly with cold water and place on cookie sheets. Bake at 300° about 20 minutes or till light straw color. Makes about 6 dozen cookies. For best results, store cookies in an airtight container for a couple of days.

*Find the Anise Candy recipe on Page 11.*

### Going & Growing Newsletter Contributors:

Bonnie Parrish  
Betty Hamata  
Sarah Browning  
Rich Apking  
Lorraine Urban  
Mary Svoboda

## “Flower Confidential” by Amy Stewart

A book review by  
Lorraine Urban



On a recent trip to my local library, the librarian thrust a book into my hand and said, “Someone has to read this book, and I think you would like it.” It is about the “cut flower” market: how and where it started (in 1593 brought from Turkey to Holland by a Dutch merchant), and about today’s largest growers in California, Ecuador, Columbia, Kenya, and Israel, as well as Holland.

Ms. Stewart’s style of writing is engaging and well documented. She made trips to see the greenhouses in these many settings. She explains how growers keep costs down, how important it is for cut flowers to have a long “vase life” and how growers need to develop flowers that withstand the 8-10 days or more to go from grower to seller, and still be a flower you might want to buy.

How many true petals does a rose have? Where and what is Terra Nigra? What’s a “scape.” Do you know where the cut flowers you bought were produced? What sort of conditions did the field workers have? What does the Society of American Florists have to do with the cut flower industry? To “dye or not to dye,” that is the question.

Ms. Stewart’s “**The Earth Moved: On the Remarkable Achievements of Earthworms**” was the winner of the California Horticultural Society’s Writer’s Award in 2005, and her articles appear regularly in “Organic Gardening.” “**Flower Confidential**” gives a whole new perspective on the flowers we give and get for Valentine’s Day.

So much information so interestingly told...well worth a Master Gardener’s time.

## Chelsea Flower Show & ENGLISH GARDEN TOUR Sussex & London England May 18-24, 2008

The University of Nebraska– Lincoln Extension in Douglas/Sarpy County Friends of Extension and 4-H are exploring an exciting, fund-raising, travel opportunity... an English Garden Tour which includes the Chelsea Flower Show in London.

We will need 25 to 50 reservations to pursue this. Everyone is welcome regardless of where they live. They do not have to have a direct tie to UNL Extension in Douglas/Sarpy Counties. If you are interested, contact:

### TAILORED TRAVEL

8031 West Center Road, Suite 214

Omaha, NE 68124

(877) 647-5567

Irelandbp@aol.com or

TailoredTravel@aol.com

- Roundtrip air Omaha to London Gatwick
- Roundtrip Airport transfers
- Private deluxe motor coach for transfers and touring
- Five nights, 3-star hotel accommodations (3 nights in Sussex and 2 nights in London)
- Daily breakfast
- Leeds Castle, Sussinghurst Garden
- Guided Great Dixter House and Garden Tour
- Guided Tour Nymans Garden or Wisely Gardens (based on availability)
- Chelsea Flower Show with full day guide
- All entrance fees and Chelsea Garden Show tickets
- Group Travel Protection
- Baggage handling and bellman gratuities

**Price per person: \$2900.00**

\*Price based on double occupancy, minimum group size requirements and availability at time of confirmation.

# Planting For The Birds

By Lorraine Urban

Have you been keeping the bird feeder full this winter? Are the binoculars handy? Do you “entertain” a large variety of birds, or are they mostly jays and sparrows and juncos?

If you’re thinking you’d like to see some nuthatches and goldfinches, more cardinals and chickadees, it many not be because of the food you have in your feeder. Many of those birds are “someplace” in your vicinity year round.

Basically, birds need food, water, shelter, and somewhere to park a nest. Provide these things and you don’t have to wait until winter to see them.

One of the prime planning months for Master Gardeners is January. Take inventory of the plants you have. Do you provide a wide range of heights? Having some tall, medium, and short plants, provides more options for nesting sites and cover from the wind and snow.

Juncos and towhees almost always nest beneath bushes; nuthatches and cardinals prefer trees.

Evergreens such as hemlock (*Tsuga*) and pine (*Pinus*) are important for sheltering birds, and, even in the winter when the branches are bare, tall deciduous trees such as silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*) and hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*) help break the force of winds that consume so much of a bird’s energy, They also provide tall “look out” perches.

What sort of year-round food does your landscape provide for birds? Only about 25% of birds take advantage of the food in bird feeders.

Consider adding more berry-producing shrubs such as *Cotoneaster*, serviceberry (*Amelanchier*), and *Viburnum*. Planting three to five of a kind together helps birds spot them more readily. *Juniper* and Washington hawthorn (*Crataegus phaenopyrum*) are “berry bearing” trees that provide food for birds in winter. Maple (*Acer*) and linden (*Tilia*) have seeds that feed birds during spring and summer.

Plant a patch of prairie if you’ve got the space. Grasses and flowers can provide both cover and food for birds, as well as nesting materials. Some suggestions are big bluestem (*Andropogon gerardii*) and little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*), grama (*Bouteloua*), Indian grass (*Sorghastrum nutans*), and compass plant (*Silphium laciniatum*).

The soft parts of the small globe thistle (*Echinops*) and the fronds of the cinnamon fern (*Osmunda cinnamomea*) are useful for nest making.

Nectar flowers such as columbine (*Aquilegia*), beard tongue (*Penstemon*), hyssop (*Agastache*) and sage (*Salvia*) are inviting to hummingbirds. Also butterfly bush (*Buddleia davidii*) and *Weigela* are shrubs with the tubular, clustered flowers that hummingbirds like.

It is not necessary to have a large yard to provide effective bird habitat. Build on what you have already in

your landscape. Add a bird bath, but make sure it’s out in the open., not too close to trees or shrubs that offer cover for predators

Finally, supplement with feeders when you don’t have natural plant food available.

If you really want to get into attracting birds, try the National Wildlife Federation’s web site for more information.

<http://www.nwf.org/backyardwildlifehabitat>



Regent Serviceberry  
*Amelanchier alnifolia* ‘Regent’

Attractive white flower clusters are the star of the show in early spring; forms sweet red to black flower clusters in June. Adaptable to dry or wet soils, tolerates heavy clay.

## 2008 Midwest Regional Master Gardener Conference

*"Gardening through the Continuum of Life"*

July 16 -19, 2008

Four Points Wyndham  
Airport Hotel & Convention Center  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Begin your conference weekend by choosing one of six fantastic motor coach tours to private gardens in the area. All tours include lunch in the air-conditioned comfort of a local restaurant and fabulous shopping opportunities at a fine garden center

The conference will kick off on **Wednesday** evening, with a get together meal and social/networking event for those who have come in advance for the Thursday tours. This will also be the start of our ongoing registration/check-in for the conference.

**Thursday** tours provide your choice of one of six fantastic motor coach tours of private gardens in the area. This will include lunch in the comfort of an air-conditioned local restaurant and the always popular stop at a great garden center. This provides the start of a perfect introduction to "Gardening through the Continuum of Life".

The culmination of Thursday's program will be an informal dinner/socialization event around the pool after the tours.

**Friday's** educational sessions begin with a presentation by **Gene Rothert**, enabling garden author, educator and manager of Chicago Botanical Gardens' Buehler Enabling Garden & Horticulture Therapy Services.

The presentation will be followed by four one hour breakout educational sessions, with eight different topics in each one

hour block. Ongoing, during the day and evening, will be a vendor's area, MG's displays and a silent auction.

**Friday** evening will be the main keynote speaker and dinner with **Michael Weishan** of the PBS Victory Garden, followed by a social/ hospitality reception.

**Saturday** morning, features the entertaining **Melinda Myers**, author and host of Public Television's Great Lakes Gardener. After Melinda's presentation, it is 'Hand's On Day', with many different opportunities to try something new.

Call Doris Fons for a registration packet- (414) 425-6072

Or contact Susan Mahr  
(608) 265-4504  
[semahr@facstaff.wiscu.edu](mailto:semahr@facstaff.wiscu.edu)

## 2009 International Master Gardener Conference

*"New Frontiers in Horticulture and Gardening"*

March 22-26, 2008  
Alexis Park Resort  
Las Vegas, Nevada

Official website of the 2009 International Master Gardener Conference:  
<http://www.unce.unr.edu/imgc/>

On-line registration and hotel reservations can be made during the summer of 2008.

Our host hotel, the **Alexis Park**, is the **premiere, all-suite, non-gaming resort** in Las Vegas. Beautifully landscaped grounds, three sparkling pools and finely appointed guest suites ensure a relaxing retreat. It's just minutes from the exciting Las Vegas Strip, where you can enjoy world-class cuisine, fantastic shopping,

renowned golf courses and spectacular entertainment.

But we're not just neon lights. Experience the "**unexpected**" **side of Vegas** — our exotic desert landscapes, historic sites, Master Gardener projects, and behind the scenes gardening at exclusive hotels.

Explore "**New Frontiers**" in **horticulture and gardening** — learn what is new and exciting in plant material and equipment, energy efficient practices, environmentally sensitive design, gardening for health, and more!

The Las Vegas **International Master Gardener Conference** will address issues that gardeners everywhere face -- water conservation, proper plant selection, soil enrichment, pest control -- while also presenting new concepts in environmental stewardship and "green" technolo-

gies. Since what is old has become new again, we will also explore historical and traditional plants and methods.

**Workshop Topics:** Green Technologies, Water Conservation, Heirloom Plants, LEED, Healthy Gardening, Native Seeds, Farm to Restaurant, Ancestors' Gardens, Trees for Tomorrow, Artful Gardening, Water Harvesting, Soil Microbes, Interactive Learning.

**Tours:** Hoover Dam, Grand Canyon, LV Springs Preserve, Ethyl M Cactus Garden and Living Machine, Red Rock Canyon, Spring Mountain Ranch, Desert Rose Garden, China Ranch Date Farm, Gardens at the Bellagio and Wynn resorts.

Contact:  
Ann Edmunds, Program Coordinator  
[edmundsa@unce.unr.edu](mailto:edmundsa@unce.unr.edu)  
702-257-5587

# Thinking Green

By Rich Apking

“Green gardening”- isn’t that kind of redundant? Actually it’s a new catch phrase for gardening practices that protect the environment.

## Frugal Fertilization

One of the first things that comes to my mind is to be extremely careful on the amount and method of applying fertilizer, both on our gardens and lawns. We are constantly besieged with ads imploring us to fertilize our lawns four or more times per year, and with each application to put on some additional chemical to get rid of crab grass, dandelions, ground ivy, bugs, grubs, ants, and a the list could go on and on.

Perhaps we need to take a long and rather conservative look at these practices. Something that I’ve observed (and had done very early in my gardening hobby) is how many people subscribe to the “more is better” philosophy. You know how it goes- if the directions state that 4 ounces to a gallon of water is the recommended dose, then 12 to 16 ounces just have to be better.

Not only is this an illegal use of the product, it often results in excess chemicals running off our landscapes or percolating down to groundwater and polluting our streams and rivers. Not only are we polluting our land, we’re wasting money, since those chemicals aren’t free, and if we use too much we’ll need to buy more sooner. A lose-lose situation at best.

## “Green” Watering

Another ‘green’ initiative is careful

watering of our gardens and lawns. I have underground sprinklers in my yard, which are both a blessing and a curse. A blessing, because if you program them, they’ll remember to water the lawn, something that I tend to forget to do.

I have my vegetable garden on an irrigation system too, with drippers and soaker hoses. They also are on a timer, so the veggies get watered on a regular basis.

This all works just great until we get a rain storm, then I need to change things so I don’t waste water by irrigating freshly rained on grass or veggies. That’s where the curse part comes in, trying to figure out when to resume the watering. A small price to pay, but irritating non-the-less.

## “Right Plant, Right Place”

One of the biggest ‘green’ initiatives is the time honored practice of planting the right plant in the right place. I’ve been at fault here so very many times. I’ve purchased a plant labeled zone 5 or 6, just certain that it will thrive in a certain corner of my landscape- only to watch it wither and die.

Thinking that maybe the plant has a disease problem, I might apply a pesticide. Or an insecticide. Or more fertilizer. Anything to try and make the plant grow. But this defeats the principles of “green gardening” because of all the chemicals I applied to try and keep this “wrong plant, wrong place” alive.

## Avoid Non-Biodegradable Waste

The latest *Organic Gardening* had a

very good article about the use of lightweight plastic grocery bags. The author favors the use of canvas totes instead of accumulating and throwing away those 2 handled plastic bags. I have to admit that she makes a good point.

You see them everywhere, blowing across streets, caught in brush and trees, you hear of animals eating them by mistake and dying, and, of course, there’s the warning not to let your children play with them.

Those are just the surface drawbacks. The bags are non-biodegradable, they will “sun rot” into very small particles that contaminate the ground and our waterways, and may kill animals that accidentally ingest them.

Canvas totes do make good sense, I think it is just remembering to take them to the store with you (sort of creating a habit). The big drawback is, in some cases, having enough totes.

These ramblings have just scratched the surface of environmentally ‘green’ practices. Also consider:

- Using disease resistant plant cultivars
- Improving your soil with organic matter for healthier plants
- Buying recycled products for the home and garden whenever possible.
- Install a rain barrel and “harvest” rain water

Happy Gardening!

# Sweet Potatoes

By Betty Hamata

Many gardeners don't realize that sweet potatoes can easily be grown in Nebraska vegetable gardens.

Sweet potatoes are usually purchased in spring as "slips" (small sprouts taken from mature potatoes) or sprouts from the garden center. They can also be started from a grocery store sweet potato, but make sure the potato hasn't been treated with a sprout inhibitor.

To start your own slips at home, lay the tuber on its side in a tray and cover it with 2 inches of moist sand. Provide bottom heat, 75-80° F degrees.

In about six weeks when the slips are about 6 inches tall, gently remove them from the tuber and plant them in potting soil. Continue growing them indoors, under lights until late spring, when all freezes are past and night temperatures are consistently above 50° F degrees.

To plant slips, form a ridge of soil 4-8 inches high and 1 foot wide in rows 3-4 feet apart. Set the slips 12-15 inches apart on the ridge with 4 inches of the stem buried.

Water the slips thoroughly after planting. Throughout the summer water the planting every 10 days and apply a 2 inch layer of organic mulch to conserve soil moisture and reduce weed germination.

The vines will make a dense groundcover throughout the garden from May until the first frost. After frost blackens the foliage, remove the vines and top-growth, and dig the tubers. Be sure to dig several feet away from the base of the plants to avoid damaging the tubers.

After harvesting, don't rush the sweet potatoes from the garden straight to their cool storage. They need to "cure" first. Curing causes the outer skin to thicken slightly, and allows the tubers to store better. Place them in a shaded, 80° F degree location for about a week to cure.

After curing, wrap each the tuber in newspaper and tuck them into a cardboard box. Place them in a dry cool, dark place at 55-60° F degrees. Sweet potatoes are best used after sitting around for a while to let their starches convert to sugar.

Ornamental sweet potato plants are usually sold as bedding plants in spring and make a wonderful ground cover, or interesting foliage accent to container plantings. They come in many colors and can vine up to two feet and longer. Their tubers are edible, but usually smaller and not as sweet as culinary sweet potato cultivars.

This year I dug the small tubers from my ornamental sweet potato vines and plan to start them during the winter. They can also be propagated at the end of summer from cuttings taken before frost.

## Sweet Potato Cultivars

### Culinary Types

- "Beauregard"- 90 days from planting to harvest. Dark red-orange skin with moist, sweet, orange flesh. Quick maturing and well adapted to difficult growing conditions. It is resistant to some of the important sweet potato diseases, but is not resistant to nematodes.
- "Centennial"- 100 days from planting to harvest. It has orange skin and bright orange flesh and moist texture. A good baking potato. Some tubers will get huge, and others long and crooked. It is resistant to root-knot nematode and wire worm.
- "Jewel"- 100 days. Deep copper skin, and deep orange flesh. It is high yielding with good wilt and root-knot nematode resistance.
- "Bush Porto Rico"- 110 days. Extremely compact, bushy vines produces roots with copper-colored skin and moist, deep reddish-orange flesh.

### Ornamental Types

- "Black Heart"- similar to "Blackie" but the leaves are not lobed, but simple, entire and heart-shaped.
- "Blackie"- first of the accepted ornamental sweet potatoes, it has five-lobed, dark purple leaves.
- "Margarita"- lobed lemon-lime, or chartreuse leaves with a hint of thin purple margins.
- "Pink Frost"- also sold as "Tricolor", this ornamental sweet potato has three-lobed leaves with streaks of pink, green and white. It's variegation is very pretty, but plants are not as vigorous as "Blackie" or "Margarita." Remove vines that revert back to green.

# How to Grow and Care for Hydrangeas

By Mary Svoboda

Hydrangeas, native to North and South America, the Himalayas, and central and eastern Asia, are beautiful, perennial, deciduous shrubs with huge flower heads that appear in mid-summer. Their flower colors include white, pink, blue, lilac, and purple in varying shades, and a variety of two-tones.

The showy “flower petals” of hydrangea are actually sepals- small modified leaves that make up the outer part of the flower. The fertile parts of hydrangea flowers are small and not showy.

Hydrangea flower clusters vary, between species and cultivars, from all fertile flowers, to the *lacecap types* with a combination of fertile and sterile flowers, to the *mophead or hortensia types* with primarily sterile flowers. When the sepals are arranged in a ring around the outside of the flowerhead, with a cluster of fertile flowers in the center, the term *lacecap* is used to describe the flower. When the sepals are dominant throughout the flowerhead, forming a more or less solid head, or ball, the term *mophead or hortensia* is used.

During the spring through fall, these bushes have attractive foliage. Most varieties of hydrangea grow from 3 to over 10 feet tall. The only downside to these lush plants with their colorful blooms, is that they shed their leaves in the fall. The leafless bush becomes a less attractive clump of stalks and stems until spring.

## Everblooming Hydrangeas

There are 70-75 hydrangea species and over well 600 named cultivars. In the past few years, “everblooming” hydrangeas have been developed; mophead hydrangeas that bloom much further north than ever before, and bloom more than once during the summer. These types of plants are called “remontant” or “free flowering.”

Remontant hydrangeas send out a main flush of flowers in early summer followed by sporadic blooming throughout the summer or later flushes of flowers in the same growing season. These flowers develop from the plant’s new spring growth.

## Reflowering Hydrangeas For Nebraska

### Remontant Types (bloom on new wood)

- “Blushing Bride”
- “Endless Summer”

### Free-flowering Types (bloom on new and old wood)

- “Nikko Blue”

How do they do this? Most hydrangeas develop their flower buds in August, Sept. and October ONLY, which then bloom the following year. If anything happens to these buds between the time they are set and the next summer (such as improper

pruning or bad weather) few if any blooms will appear.

However, a few hydrangeas have the ability to set new flower buds in the spring after the old ones have been pruned off or damaged. ‘Endless Summer’ is just such a hydrangea. ‘Endless Summer’ was collected by an employee of a commercial nursery in Minnesota, who noticed that a neighbor’s hydrangea flowered late in the year. With the neighbor’s permission, the plant was propagated and tested. Dr. Michael Dirr, University of Georgia woody plant specialist, saw the plant flowering in September 1998 and realized it’s great garden and commercial value. Botanically, the plant is known as *H. macrophylla* ‘Bailmer’ and is now widely sold as ‘Endless Summer’.

## Propagation

Hydrangeas are grown from cuttings. Start new cuttings from April through August. Select new growth and cut about 6-8 inches from the tip of a non-flowering stem with a sharp, clean knife. The cutting should have two to three pairs of leaves. Remove the bottom pair, and dip the stem in rooting hormone. Place the cutting in sandy soil and cover it with a glass jar or other clear cover to create a mini-greenhouse. Keep the soil moist. Cuttings may also root in a glass of water.

Once roots have formed, new plants can be moved to your garden or into containers. Hydrangeas can also be propagated by harvesting the seeds.

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## Hydrangeas, continued

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### Growing Hydrangeas

Hydrangeas are easy to grow. They prefer full sun to partial shade, particularly morning sun and afternoon shade. This is especially true of the big-leaf hydrangeas, *H. macrophylla*; these are blue and pink mopheads and lacecaps. In warmer climates, put them in a more shaded area, to reduce wilting in the midday sun.

Bigleaf hydrangeas are most easily grown in Zone 8, but can grow in Zone 5B when sited in a protected location and given winter protection. Zone hardiness is not the only factor to be considered. Some hydrangeas will do fine in colder areas as long as the winter is not too mild. The condition hydrangeas are most sensitive to is being exposed to a freeze after an extended warm spell.

Smooth hydrangea, *H. arborescens*, also prefers partial shade but will tolerate full sun if given enough moisture. 'Annabelle', with its large white flower heads, is one of the most commonly planted hydrangeas and is widely available from garden centers. The white flowers age to an attractive light green color. It is claimed to grow as far north as Zone 3A.

If your landscape is mostly sunny and hot, you may wish to grow the panical hydrangeas, *H. paniculata*, which can take all day sun if they receive enough moisture. *H. paniculata* 'Grandiflora', often called peegee hydrangea, is the most common cultivar available and boasts large, white, sterile mophead flowers.

Oakleaf hydrangea, *H. quercifolia*, will also grow in sun or shade, but the blooms last longer if they get afternoon shade in hot climates. It's a beautiful plant that makes a dramatic show in spring. It will grow unprotected in cooler areas than bigleaf hydrangeas, and is hardy through Zone 4B-5A. It does not do well in areas that stay continuously moist.

Hydrangeas planted under a tree often fail to thrive because tree roots are very aggressive and competitive in the rich, moist soil preferred by hydrangeas. Under large hardwood trees, the light is often insufficient for growing hydrangeas. If grass won't grow under a tree, hydrangeas probably won't either.

Hydrangeas prefer rich, moist, soil and liberal fertilizer. If using a slow release fertilizer, it should be applied twice a year. When planting, add generous amounts of rich compost. Add mulch yearly to help retain moisture, and to replenish nutrients. Keep the soil moist the entire growing season to promote lush growth and big blooms.

Water plants deeply, but infrequently. Watering every day can be just as destructive as allowing plants to dry out. If your soil does not drain well, do not allow it to remain soggy around the hydrangeas. This is especially true for oakleaf, which will rot if they stand in soil that is wet.

Flowers will begin to bloom in early to mid-summer. Remove spent blooms as soon as possible to allow the plant to direct its strength to

growing and producing new buds rather than seeds. Clusters of larger flowers will be produced if the plant is thinned down to half the original number of stems. Alternatively, pinching out the tips of the new growth (prior to budding) will produce many more flowers, but the clusters will be small.

Prune out winter-killed stems in spring after new growth has resumed. Save large scale pruning for early August, or after the plants have finished blooming. If the bushes become too large they can be cut back close to the ground, or consider transplanting them to a larger location.

### Transplanting

The best time to transplant hydrangeas is when they are dormant, after most of the leaves have fallen off. When digging hydrangeas to transplant, dig up as much of the root ball as possible. If transplanting your hydrangeas while dormant, water them deeply one time after planting them in the new location. They may need no more water until spring brings warmer weather, but if dry conditions develop soak them well once a month when the soil is not frozen. If you live in a hot, dry climate, regular watering during the summer will be very important for the first and second summer.

### Color Me Hydrangeas

A leopard cannot change his spots, but hydrangeas can change their colors, depending upon the soil conditions. The amount of the micronutrient aluminum available for uptake

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## 2008 New Master Gardener Training Schedule

| Date/<br>Thursdays | Time       | Topic  | Instructor     |
|--------------------|------------|--|----------------|
| February 28        | 9:00-12:00 | Plant Morphology & Growth                        | Anne Streich   |
|                    | 1:00-4:00  | Growth of Woody Ornamental Plants                | Sarah Browning |
| March 6            | 9:00-12:00 | Soils, Amendments & Fertilizers                  | Del Hemsath    |
|                    | 1:00-4:00  | Insect Basics                                    | Sarah Browning |
| March 13           | 9:00-12:00 | Herbaceous Plant Selection & Management          | Kim Todd       |
|                    | 1:00-4:00  | Tree & Shrub Selection                           | Sarah Browning |
| March 20           | 9:00-12:00 | Intro to Plant Pathology                         | Amy Ziems      |
|                    | 1:00-4:00  | IPM & Pesticide Safety                           | Sarah Browning |
| March 27           | 9:00-12:00 | Turf Care, Insects & Diseases                    | Roch Gaussion  |
|                    | 1:00-4:00  | Weed Identification & Control                    | Sarah Browning |
| April 3            | Snow Date  | Make up day for any class cancelled due to snow. |                |

Class topics are subject to change as needed. Recertifying Master Gardeners are welcome to attend any of these sessions. Please let Sarah, (402) 727-2775, know ahead of time so plenty of handouts and other class supplies are available.

*Please Join Us!*

### Newsletter Committee Meeting February 19th

All meetings are held from  
5:30-6:30 pm at the  
UNL Extension Office  
1206 W. 23rd Street  
Fremont, NE.

Join us for pizza and brain-  
storming newsletter article  
ideas for our April issue of  
the Going & Growing  
Newsletter.



Mark your calendars  
**Saturday, April 26**

9:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.  
Agriculture Hall  
Nebraska State Fair Park  
in Lincoln, NE

### Spring Affair Plant Sale "Gardens For Green Living"

402/472-2679

<http://springaffair.unl.edu>

Sponsored by the Nebraska State Fair Park & Arboretum,  
UNL Botanical Garden & Arboretum

## Anise Candy

1 cup granulated sugar  
 ½ cup light corn syrup  
 1/3 cup water  
 ¼ t. anise oil  
 Food coloring

Line 8x8x2 pan with foil extending foil up sides; butter foil.

Butter sides of 1 quart saucepan. In saucepan, combine sugar, syrup, and water. Bring to boiling, stirring constantly till sugar is dissolved.

Cook to hard-crack stage (300°).

Remove from heat; add flavoring and coloring. Pour into prepared pan.

When just beginning to set around the edges, lift foil out of pan. With scissors, cut candy into 1-inch strips, beginning with outside edges. Then cut into very small pieces of irregular shape.

Makes ½ pound.

## Recertification Programs- “Creating A Horticulture Paradise”

Join us for this series of free, horticulture seminars for gardeners of all ages and Master Gardeners.

| Program Series- Part I               |                           | Program Series- Part II   |                     |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|---|---------------------|
| <b>January 8</b>                     |                           | <b>February 19</b>  |                     |
| • Spring Flowering Bulbs             |                           | • Container Gardening with Hypertufa                                  |                     |
| <b>January 15</b>                    |                           | <b>February 26</b>  |                     |
| • Snakes of Nebraska                 |                           | • Effective Control of Backyard Wildlife                              |                     |
| <b>January 22</b>                    |                           | <b>March 4</b>  |                     |
| • Common Insects & Diseases of Fruit |                           | • Earthkind Roses: Environmentally Friendly and Low Maintenance Roses |                     |
| <b>January 29</b>                    |                           | <b>March 11</b>   |                     |
| • Creating Curb Appeal               |                           | • Tree Diseases & the Environment                                     |                     |
| <b>February 5</b>                    |                           | <b>March 18</b>   |                     |
| • Ornamental Grasses                 |                           | • Small Fruit Selections for Eastern Nebraska                         |                     |
| <b>Call to register:</b>             |                           | <b>Call to register:</b>  |                     |
| Burt County, (402) 374-2930          |                           | Cuming County, (402) 372-6006   |                     |
| Washington County, (402) 426-9455    |                           | Dodge County, (402) 727-2775  |                     |
| <b>Location &amp; Time:</b>          | 7:00-9:00 p.m.            | <b>Location &amp; Time:</b>   | 7:00-9:00 p.m.      |
| 2:30-4:30 p.m.                       | Arbor Park Middle School, | 2:30-4:30 p.m.  | First State Bank    |
| First National Bank NE               | Blair, NE                 | Cuming County Courthouse,   | 1005 E. 23rd Street |
| Tekamah, NE                          |                           | West Point NE   | Fremont, NE         |

University of Nebraska- Lincoln Extension educational programs abide with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.

## Nebraska Arboretums— History and Affiliation

*By Justin Evertson, Nebraska Statewide Arboretum*

Arboretums in Nebraska have a rich history. Many of the first settlers were tree planting enthusiasts—none more so than J. Sterling Morton. His efforts in the late 1800s resulted in the establishment of more than 100 tree and shrub species at his home known now as Arbor Lodge State Historical Park. Mr. Morton was the first to plant white pine, catalpa, chestnut, several types of oak and many different maples in Nebraska. His affinity for tree planting was passed on to his children, including Joy, who established the world renowned Morton Arboretum near Chicago, Illinois.

Robert W. Furnas, a contemporary of Morton's, was also a great tree advocate and was the governor who signed the first Arbor Day proclamation in 1874. Furnas helped plant many thousands of trees in Nebraska and was a tireless promoter of trees during the state's early days. Today there is even an arboretum named in his honor in his hometown of Brownville.

Largely because of Morton's and Furnas's efforts, tree-planting fever took hold in Nebraska and people in many communities sought to plant a great variety of species. Over time, several diverse plantings that could be considered as arboretums evolved.

Today, there are 55 arboretums in Nebraska that are affiliated with the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum. Many other sites are considering affiliation or are working toward it. Affiliate sites of NSA have joined to-

gether to share resources, ideas and plant testing information. It is an association of like-minded people working hard to improve the landscape resources of greater Nebraska.

### **Tips for Starting an Arboretum**

There is no single formula for establishment of an arboretum. Such an effort is dependent on the needs of the local community, the constraints of the planting site, the local climatic conditions and the personal desires of the people involved.

Regardless of the shape an arboretum takes, the most important thing is that it is properly maintained. Individual plants will come and go but as long as an arboretum is well cared for, people will continue to come and learn and be inspired.

For anyone looking to develop an arboretum, we offer the suggestions that follow. These are only guidelines; and there are, no doubt, many other ingredients that have led to successful efforts elsewhere.

1. If possible, use an existing group of trees as the backbone for an arboretum. A park, campus, school grounds or other public property is often already planted with many trees and makes a great starting point for an arboretum. Such sites usually have the added advantage of having dedicated maintenance personnel already in place.
2. Planning and design is critical. Take the time to think ahead about what species to include and how to arrange them. Hiring a profes-

sional landscape designer/architect is money well spent on such an endeavor.

3. The design should balance important landscape design concepts (massing, repetition, mass/void, etc.) with species diversity. It is important to have a backbone of reliable species repeated throughout the collection. Such trees will help insure longevity for much of the tree mass and will help give protection to the marginally hardy species.
4. The needs of the intended audience are important. Try to judge what it is that most visitors would gain from such a planting and develop the collection accordingly.
5. Be careful not to exceed maintenance abilities. Start small and add a little bit more every year.
6. Maintain the site first and foremost for the trees and other landscape plants and secondly for turfgrass. Damage caused by mowers, string trimmers and misuse of lawn herbicides is perhaps the single greatest cause of tree mortality and decline across the state.
7. There is no minimum number of species or types of woody plants required for a site to be called an arboretum. Individual site constraints, goals and common sense will indicate when enough diversity has been reached to warrant the title. Sites within the NSA system range in diversity from a few dozen types to more than 500.
8. Resist the temptation to collect one of everything. Instead try to concentrate on groups or types of

## Arboretums, continued

*(Continued from page 12)*

- plantings that make sense to the local needs and conditions.
9. Think about giving the arboretum a signature collection—something that is unique in the state or region. There are many possibilities, including a collection of evergreens, nut trees, tall canopy shade trees, species for windbreaks, uncommon shrubs, trees suitable for planting along streets, shrubs for homeowners, trees with showy flowers, trees for small spaces, etc. Genus collections such as oak, maple, pine, viburnum, etc. can also be a good way to help focus a collection.
  10. Keep good records. The best thing about an arboretum is that it serves as a living reminder of what will and will not grow in a certain location. Good record-keeping helps prevent retrying plant types that have proven unsuitable.
  11. Make sure the site is used as an educational resource. Let people know about it. Label plants. Develop brochures. The arboretum will not be worth the effort if no one uses it.
  12. Talk to others who have done it. Nothing beats the insight, recommendations and cautions that are conveyed from people who have already established arboretums.
  13. Have fun with it!

### Help in Getting Started

A great thing about developing an arboretum in Nebraska is that the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum is available to assist with the effort. This nationally-unique organization is devoted to helping communities across

the state develop arboretums and improve their public landscapes.

NSA's professional staff is available to offer guidance in several areas of arboretum development including planning and design, plant selection, educational assistance and funding opportunities.

Anyone is welcome to contact the NSA office for advice and feedback. For assistance beyond basic advice, prospective sites are encouraged to join NSA as Associate Members. The \$65 annual membership dues signify that a site is serious about its efforts which will in turn garner a greater commitment from NSA.

### Affiliation with the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum

Once an arboretum has been established (a planned collection of plants has been assembled to carry out an identified mission), then such a site may be ready to join the family of affiliate sites that make up the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum.

To become affiliated with NSA, an arboretum must meet high standards for planning, maintenance and education/outreach. The basic requirements for affiliation with NSA are:

1. An organized support association (Arboretum Committee) comprised of at least five members and representing a broad spectrum of the community.
2. A written master plan that identifies the mission and guides the design, management, educa-

tional program and future development of the arboretum.

3. An information/promotion program consisting of labeling, orientation brochure, entry sign and at least one public event per year featuring the arboretum.
4. Approval of affiliation by the NSA Executive Board.

The benefits of affiliation are many. They include:

- Technical assistance from NSA staff
- Statewide and regional recognition and exposure
- Assistance with plant labeling
- Possible financial support for development activities
- Professional development opportunities for the curator and others involved with helping to maintain the arboretum

Full benefits of regular membership in NSA including subscriptions to the organizational newsletter and horticultural magazines, discounts on hard-to-find horticultural books and discounts on special events and programs.

Perhaps the best benefit of affiliation is the opportunity to associate and share ideas with like-minded people working to improve landscapes all across Nebraska.

Contact the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum office at (402) 472-2971 for more information about affiliation and about the Associate Member program.



## 2008 All-American Selections

Watch for these great plants at your local nursery this spring.

### **Osteospermum 'Asti White'**

Pure white, 2 to 2-1/2 inch, daisy flowers with blue centers are the main attraction for 'Asti White', and the thick fleshy leaves indicate its drought tolerance.

'Asti White' is the first white Osteospermum, or Cape Daisy, propagated from seed. There are several advantages. The flowers will remain open under cloudy conditions, unlike other daisy flowers originating from South Africa, which close.

'Asti White' plants will flower uniformly about 17 weeks from seed. Gardeners have the choice of growing from seed or purchasing plants depending upon their resources.

'Asti White' plants will bloom and recover from a slight frost. These plants can be placed in the spring or fall garden, weeks earlier than other tender annuals.

The uniform plants thrive in a sunny garden, reaching about 17 to 20 inches tall and wide. 'Asti White' plants adapt perfectly to growing in containers, preferably 6-inch pots or larger.

### **Viola 'Skippy XL Plum-Gold'**

Sunny faces uniquely designed with plum shades surrounding the golden center "faces" are a great feature of 'Skippy XL Plum-Gold'.

The blooms are small, about 1-1/2 inches, but the number of flowers produced more than makes up for

the size. 'Skippy XL Plum-Gold' won the AAS Award for its lavish number of blooms. In the North, plants can be expected to begin blooming in spring up to the hottest parts of summer.

The petite plants growing 6 to 8 inches tall and wide are highly recommended for combination planters. Gardeners can rely on 'Skippy XL Plum-Gold' to provide abundant blooms whether growing in containers, window boxes, or annual or perennial gardens.

### **Eggplant 'Hansel'**

Best described as a miniature eggplant, 'Hansel' is a smaller-sized plant with finger-sized clusters of fruit.

Despite its smaller size, don't think it produces less fruit. These vigorous plants, reaching less than three feet in height, produce clusters of three to six fruit. They mature early, about 55 days from transplanting into warm soil- about 10 days earlier than similar cultivars.

If the 3-inch fruit clusters are left on the plant, they grow in size, but remain tender and non-bitter, unlike other eggplant. This trait offers gardeners flexibility in harvest.

'Hansel' is also highly recommended for use in containers, adapting perfectly to container growing conditions. This diminutive plant fits on smaller patios or decks, yet still provides high yields of shiny purple eggplants ready to marinate and grill.



**'Asti White'**



**'Skippy XL Plum-Gold'**



**'Hansel'**

## 2008 Great Plants for the Great Plains

The GreatPlants program is a joint effort of the Nebraska Nursery & Landscape Association, [www.nnla.org](http://www.nnla.org), and the Nebraska Statewide Arboretum, [arboretum.unl.edu](http://arboretum.unl.edu), that selects and promotes exceptional plants – reliably hardy, easy to care for, and ornamentally worthwhile – for GreatPlants releases. Ask for them at your local nursery this spring!

This year's GreatPlants program includes two trees, and one shrub, perennial and ornamental grass, each.

### American Hophornbeam

#### *Ostrya virginiana*,

Graceful medium-sized native tree with many horizontal branches and stems often forming interesting zig-zag pattern; Sinewy bark and catkins add winter interest; hop-like fruits in summer; heart-shaped leaves feel like felt to the touch, change to yellow in the fall; slow growing but once established makes good growth; resists ice, snow, insects and disease; Adapted throughout the state. 30-40' h, 20-25' w. Hardy to zone 4

### Lacebark Pine

#### *Pinus bungeana*

This is one of the most beautiful pines, the bark on this small tree flake away creating a patchwork of white, green, and purple. The lustrous deep green needles are stiff, sharply pointed. This slow growing pine prefers well-drained, dry soils and full sun. It is pyramidal when young, often with many trunks growing into an open, picturesque specimen with age. 30-40' high. Hardy to zone 4.

### Eastern Wahoo

#### *Euonymus atropurpurea*

This native shrub is often referred to as burning bush with its orange red fall color and attractive rosy-pink fruit capsules that are long lasting, persisting into winter. This one of our most shade tolerant of woody plants, yet it grows well and becomes an attractive, dense specimen in full sun. pH adaptable; 8-12'h. Zone 3.

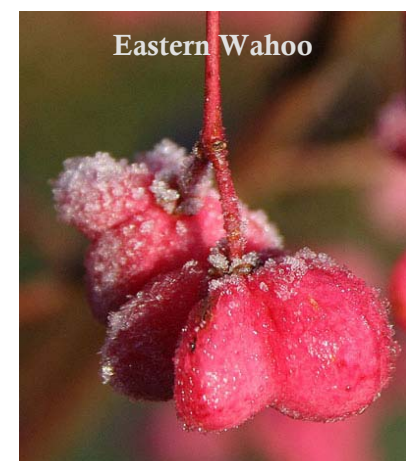
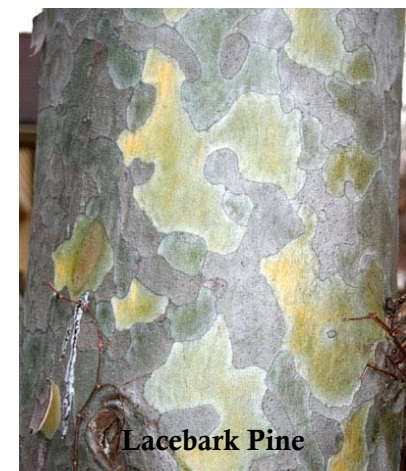
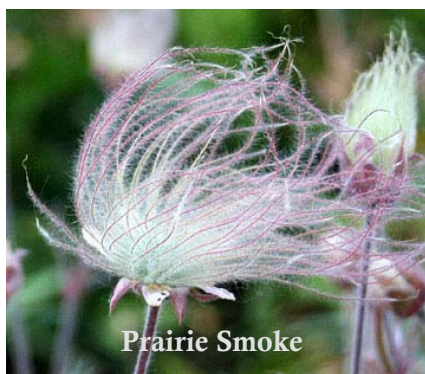
### Prairie Smoke, *Geum triflorum*

This distinctive native of the northern plains has small purplish-red nodding flowers in early spring. The flowers soon give rise to feathery silver and pink seed heads, which persist for many weeks after flowering. The attractive, deeply cut leaves look great for the rest of the season. Easy to grow and thrives in poor dry soil. Grows less than a foot high and creeps slowly by rootstocks. Zone 1.

### Blue Grama

#### *Bouteloua gracilis*

This durable native grass has one-sided seedheads that resemble a delicate, curved eye-brow and tufts of slender, curly, gray-green leaves. Grows well on clay, silt or sand. Autumn foliage may develop a purple hue. Hardy to zone 3.



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We're on the web, at <http://extensionhorticulture.unl.edu>.  
Click on 'Master Gardener Program.'



## Hydrangeas, continued

*(Continued from page 9)*

by the plant results in the color changes. The higher the aluminum level, the bluer the flowers.

Soil pH also influences the availability of aluminum in the soil. Aluminum is more available in acidic soils and largely unavailable in alkaline soils. This results in blue flowers on plants grown in acidic soils, white flowers on neutral pH soils, and pink flowers on alkaline soils with very low aluminum levels.

To achieve blue-colored flowers when working with eastern Nebraska's soil, lower the soil pH by applying sulfur, and supplement the soil with aluminum sulfate.

### Troubleshooting

Aphids, spidermites and a few other insects can be an occasional problem on hydrangeas. Identify the insect, then if necessary treat with mild insecticides or insecticidal soap. Powdery mildew, blights and leaf spots can occur. Treat plants as needed with a fungicide.

One of the most common problems with hydrangeas is failure to bloom. This is most commonly caused by winter damage from late spring frosts that kill the flower buds. Pruning plants at the wrong time of year can also be a culprit, along with too much shade or poor

soil conditions. Make sure plants are sited properly, in well drained soil.

### Gift Hydrangeas

Hydrangeas that come wrapped in colorful foil are beautiful, however, there are several things to consider before planting them in your garden.

Gift hydrangeas have been bred to produce an abundance of flowers in a frost-free greenhouse, with little concern for cold hardiness. You may or may not have a plant cold hardy enough for Nebraska's climate.

Also, these plants have been grown in greenhouses and must be hardened off before planting outside. Scorching winds, dry conditions, hot or cold temperatures, and bright sun can result in leaf burn, drying or death if plants are not properly acclimated before planting.

If you like the idea of a challenge, planting floral-gift hydrangeas in the garden is worth a try, however, the results are much less predictable than with plants purchased from a nursery or garden center for landscape use.