



Digging in Dodge

Dodge County Master Gardeners Association

Issue 14

2008 Service Projects

Master Gardeners will be working on the following projects in Dodge County this year. If you would like to help with a project, please call the contact person listed.

Satterlee Clark House

Judy Zirbel Memorial Garden

Horicon

Chris Zuleger, 485-2105

Intersection Garden

Hwys 33 and E, Horicon

Barbara Traughber, 387-9135

Seippel Homestead

Beaver Dam

Kay Voelker, 885-6256

Golden Living Center

Watertown

Gail Nampel, 887-2887

First Baptist Church

Horicon

Lisa Traughber, 387-4741

Clearview

Wild Goose City Park

St. John's Lutheran Church

Juneau

Marianne Zastrow, 386-4465

Downtown Container Plantings

Beaver Dam

Ken Thomas, 887-8876

Foster Park and Limestone School Sign

Mayville

Paula Larsen, 387-5959

Neosho-Rubicon Historical Society's Old Village Hall Museum

Neosho

Sue McKendry, 625-3554

Daybreak

Waupun

Mayville Historical Society

Mayville

Carol Shirk, 387-5105

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Because of the flooding In June many people have had questions about the safety of eating vegetables and fruit from flooded areas. This article (reprinted with permission) will answer many of those concerns.

Safety of Produce from Flooded Gardens (June 2008)

As a result of recent flooding, questions have been raised about the safety of consuming produce from gardens that were under water for a day or two. How concerned you have to be about using garden produce after a flood depends, to a large degree, on how "clean" the flood water was or whether it was likely to have been contaminated with sewage, river or creek water, farm run-off, or industrial pollutants.

The most conservative answer — one that eliminates any and all risks — is that you discard all produce that was touched by flood water. However, with weeks left in the growing season, you may wish to salvage some crops. Here are tips for considering what can be salvaged and what must be discarded from your flooded garden.

Produce can be **cooked** to ensure safety, and this is the best choice if anything that was touched by flood water

will be served to those most at risk for serious consequences from foodborne illness: young children, the elderly, pregnant women and those with compromised immune systems.

For produce to be consumed uncooked (raw), begin by **discarding all leafy vegetables** such as lettuce or spinach — regardless of how mature the plants are. It's not possible to scrub these crops as they have many ridges and crevices that could contain contaminated silt or bacteria. All **soft fruits** that are **ready to harvest** such as strawberries or raspberries, must be cooked; they too are impossible to thoroughly clean and **can not** be safely consumed raw.

Other produce may be salvaged depending on the crop and how far along it is in the growing season. In general, any produce for which the edible part was directly touched by flood water presents a potential risk to health if consumed. This includes produce that was submerged or splashed by flood water. The ability to salvage crops that will be eaten raw with minimal risk depends on the source of the flood water, time to harvest, and whether potential contamination will have been internalized into the plant tissue. One starting point for evaluating the safety of produce

from flooded gardens is the National Organic Program (NOP) guidance to farmers wishing to harvest produce from soil fertilized with non-composted manure. The NOP requires a 90-day period before harvesting edible material from plants grown in soil fertilized with non-composted manure — the manure can not have touched the edible material. NOP standards require a 120-day period before harvest of edible plant material with direct contact with non-composted manure. Research suggests that contamination from non-composted manure should present a more significant health risk than contamination from flood waters.

Early season crops that will be harvested within the next few weeks and that remained above flood waters should **be safe if cooked or peeled**. Examine any produce carefully before harvest. If it is soft or cracked, bruised, or has open fissures where contamination might have entered, throw it out. Begin by rinsing produce with clear tap water (do not use soap) followed by a brief soak (2 minutes) in a weak chlorine solution of 2 Tablespoons bleach to a gallon of water. Rinse in cool, clean tap water. Peel or cook thoroughly before eating. Take care to prevent cross contamination in the

kitchen. Change the bleach solution if you notice the water is no longer clean.

Plants where fruits have set (tomatoes) or where flowers are evident (broccoli/cauliflower) present an undefined risk. Before consuming these crops raw, consider the source of the flood water, the time since contamination, and the health of the tissue. Always discard any tissue that is bruised, cracked or otherwise blemished. Washing fresh produce with clear water, followed by a brief soak in a dilute bleach solution (see above) and then rinsing before eating or peeling will help to reduce any remaining risk.

Underground vegetables such as beets, carrots and potatoes that are still early in the growing season should be safe if allowed to grow to maturity (4-8 more weeks). Root crops that will be consumed within the month (i.e. new potatoes) should be washed in water, rinsed and sanitized as directed above before cooking thoroughly. Note: beets may be peeled after cooking, if desired.

Melons and other fruits which will be eaten raw **should not be consumed**. Recent foodborne illness outbreaks linked to melons suggest that these low-acid fruits may not be safe even if surface-sanitized.

Late-season vegetables that result from flowers produced on growth that devel-

ops after flood waters subside should be safe. To increase safety, cook them thoroughly, or at least wash them well and peel them, if possible, before eating. This could include tomatoes, peppers, eggplants, squash, cucumbers, and similar vegetables.

Flood-damaged garden produce that is otherwise unfit for eating **should not be canned** or otherwise preserved. Garden produce that **would** be safe to consume after washing, sanitizing and cooking may be safely canned. Because the low temperature of home dehydrators do not destroy high numbers of bacteria, **do not attempt** to dehydrate produce from flooded gardens.

Never sell produce from a flood-damaged garden at a farm market or farm stand until you are sure that all contamination has been removed from the garden, usually a period of at least one month after the last incidence of flooding. Check with the Division of Food Safety of the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (608) 224-4665 if you have questions about market sales of garden-flooded produce.

August 2007 (rev. June 2008)
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Food Science Extension Specialist

Steve Ingham
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University of Wisconsin Extension

Website Information

During these hot, humid days when you don't really want to be outside have you been browsing on your computer? Check out the Wisconsin Master Gardener website (<http://www.hort.wisc.edu/mastergardener/>)...it may quickly become one of your favorites. Currently in the "Horticulture Info" link the main articles are about Yellow Coneflower (until recently it was the only species in the "purple coneflower" genus that doesn't have purple flowers), Nodding Onions, and Queen Anne's Lace (Did you know this was brought to the new country by colonists as a medicinal plant?).

If you go into the archives you can find articles about the "Herb of the Year" for 2008 (calendula), heirloom vegetables, yellow foxglove, emerald ash borer trapping, and other fascinating topics.

In addition, in the "Horticulture Info" link you can find a list of statewide organizations, clubs and societies, and public gardens (including hours listed, admission fees, etc.).

While you are there, check out our own Dodge County link by following the "Local Association" link. You can also check into one of the 47 other local Master Gardener associations affiliated with the WIMGA and see what events they have that might be of interest to you.

Upcoming meetings

Anyone with an interest in gardening is welcome to attend the following free programs. Master Gardener meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of the month. Unless otherwise noted, the meetings are at 6:30 p.m. in the Administration Building, 127 E. Oak Street, Juneau.

August 28

Leaf sand casting

Gail Nampel and Pat Kaiser

Gail and Pat will conduct a hands-on workshop where attendees will be able to make a leaf casting. This meeting will take place at Gail's house, W7498 Cty Rd. E, Beaver Dam. A supply list was distributed at the July meeting. If you did not get one, contact Gail.

September 26

Hypertufa containers

Carol Shirk and others

Carol and other Master Gardeners will conduct a class on making hypertufa containers. The class will be conducted at Carol's house, N9429 Cty Rd. Y, Mayville. There will be a fee to cover provided materials, however you will still need to bring your own container. This class will be limited to 12 people on a first come, first served basis. Final details will be available at the August meeting, or contact Carol.

October 23

Recipes with edible flowers

Carol LaVinge

Edgewater Home & Garden

Carol will share methods for preparing those blooming edibles. She will share which flowers to avoid, how to harvest them and how to prepare them. Did you know that flowers are nearly calorie free? Come and learn more.



November

Executive Board meeting

December

No meeting

2009 Meetings

Do you want to learn more about hardy plants, grafting trees, plants, pets, and pests or designing for all season color? Then you will want to stay tuned for the 2009 meetings. More details will be available in the next newsletter. Is there something you are interested in learning more about? Contact anyone on the Board with your suggestions.

Home Living Column

Dodge County Master Gardeners write a newspaper column that is included in the Home Living Section of the *Daily Citizen*. This section comes out the third weekend of the month.

If you are interested in writing a column on a gardening topic, contact Gail Nampel at 920-887-2887. Hours spent researching and writing the column count toward volunteer service hours.

Volunteer Hours

It will soon be time to turn in your volunteer hours. Chris Zuleger is our local record keeper and she will need your hour sheets by October 1st. She will tabulate the hours and send a report to the state association (WIMGA). Completed forms can be sent to Chris at 509 E. Maple Street, Horicon, WI 53032. Twenty-four volunteer service hours must be completed to be certified or recertified.

Presentations at the monthly meetings you have attended count toward the ten education hours required if you are being recertified. You can also include viewing time for the Wisconsin Gardener and Great Lakes Gardener television shows.

Summertime Tips

Now that planting is done, everything is lush and green, flowers are blooming, and harvest is commencing, what can you do to keep things moving along smoothly? The following are some tips for your August gardening:

Vegetable gardens:

As you pick produce that has ripened and you have empty space in your garden you can fill the space up again with more goodies. It is not too late to plant kale, kohlrabi, lettuce of all sorts, peas, radish, spinach, and turnips. If we have a late frost you might be able to squeak in a crop of green beans, beets, or summer squash. It still isn't too late to transplant that rhubarb that you have always wanted but never got planted.

Walk through your garden for a few minutes each day and monitor its health. Watch for insect damage and respond promptly, continue to pinch off the suckers on your tomato plants, pinch the ends off your vining crops to promote fruit growth, and slip a plastic lid under your melons to protect them from rot and grubs. Pull out those weeds when they are little and they will be much easier to handle. As best as you are able, never let weeds go to seed...they will spread thousands of seeds which will

sprout and cause you headaches next year.

As for that zucchini that you are harvesting by the basketful... when you share with your neighbors and friends, pass along a good recipe or two to help them use up the bounty. Try this one for some good summertime eating:

Zucchini Garlic Pasta

16 oz. wagon wheel pasta or other specialty pasta

½ pound sliced bacon*

1 medium onion, chopped

4-6 garlic cloves, minced

2-3 medium zucchini (about 1 ½ pounds) halved and sliced

¼ c. grated Romano or Parmesan cheese

Cook pasta according to package directions. Meanwhile, in a large skillet, over medium heat, cook bacon until crisp. Remove with a slotted spoon and set aside to drain; discard all but 2T. of drippings. Sauté onion and garlic in drippings until tender, about 3 minutes. Add the zucchini and cook until tender, about 6 minutes. Drain pasta and add to the zucchini mixture. Add bacon and toss. Transfer to a serving bowl and sprinkle with cheese. (*Optional method is to omit bacon and sauté vegetables in olive oil.)

Yield: 6-8 servings

Flower gardens:

Many flowers are blooming beautifully this time of year. In order to keep them beautiful remember to dead head them regularly. Stake any tall plants such as gladiolas before they begin to fall over. Since August tends to be the hottest part of the season add some mulch around your plant if you have not already taken care of this task. Adding 2-3" of mulch will help keep the soil cooler and retain some much needed moisture.

Be sure to cut some of your flowering beauties and bring them inside to enjoy. The early morning hours are the best time to cut flowers since that is when the plant tissues are most filled with moisture. However, if you are planning on harvesting the plants for drying, wait until midday.

August is a good time to plant a few things for fall enjoyment. Pansies, flowering kale, and mums enjoy the cooler weather that is just around the corner. While you are outside amongst your plants, take a few cuttings to start inside for overwintering. Coleus, geraniums, wax begonias, impatiens, and fuchsias are just a few that can be started from cuttings.

Happy gardening!

Carol Shirk

Master Gardener Volunteer 2008

Dodge County Master Gardeners Association

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[www.hort.wisc.edu/
mastergardener](http://www.hort.wisc.edu/mastergardener)



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*“Working in the garden ...gives
me a profound feeling of inner
peace.”
- Ruth Stout*