

Gardening Matters



Yates County Master Gardener Newsletter

Winter 2021, Issue 4



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Executive Director's Note



Photo Credit: Maggie Mahr

The New Year is a season for resolutions and pledges. I recently read somewhere that we should move toward *intentions* instead of resolutions. Intentions are a focused meditation on purpose: what are your goals and plans for the upcoming season? Flower or vegetable garden? Annuals or perennials? What colors? What Heights? What garden decorations or toys? What will you plant to have success against animals, insects and birds? Write down your thoughts, what it may mean [amount of time, time of day] for implementation [weeding, watering, side dressing] and how to adjust your objectives for 2021. Keep a garden diary or use a memo app to make notes,

take photos and create a tickler of TO DO's [buy seeds, garden layout map, soil testing] and things to purchase [gardening fencing, stone/wood borders, compost, top soil] in preparation for the growing season.

Winter is a great time for garden planning. Think about what grew well, and what did not and why.

This issue of *Gardening Matters* provides lots of information on how to direct seed, start plants indoors and maximize the stages [flowering, fruit, greenery] of common and unusual plants. Our Yates County Master Gardeners have shared some *lessons learned* from the past growing year. All gardeners benefit from reflection and adjusting intentions. Take the time to develop your gardening purpose and objectives.

Happy New Year and Happy Garden Planning!

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Arlene A. Wilson". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

**Executive Director & Master Gardener
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Yates County**

****As of January 4th, 2021, the Yates County Office Building is open to the general public from 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday. However, as part of the effort to slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus, appointments are preferred and some departments and services will be subject to continued limitations as described on their website (yatescounty.org)***

Should you need to reach any of our staff members, visit <http://yates.cce.cornell.edu/staff>. You can also send us a message via our Facebook page, or call the office at 315-536-5123 to make an appointment.

Garden Chat:

Catching up w/ the Yates County Master Gardeners!



The best gardeners are the ones who are brave enough to make mistakes! The Yates County Master Gardeners fess up to what they wish they had done differently with our gardens in 2020:

Celeste

1. Not eliminating the milkweed shoots (or at least thinned out) before they took over one end of my bed! (Though the butterflies enjoyed it!)
2. I never got that second crop of cool weather veggies planted.



Susan



Biggest gardening regret was putting in a 30x60 vegetable garden never realized that our backyard was a hotbed of animal and insect activity. Between deer, Colorado potato beetles and a late spring snow...we saw the death of a lot of plants and our dreams of a bountiful harvest went up in a slow spiral of despair. Always know the traffic pattern which surrounds your garden.

Marian

In 2020, I encountered a couple of interesting situations - one my fault and one Mother Nature's. I've successfully grown dahlias for several years now. One strategy I use to get them flowering earlier is to plant the tubers in pots and then transfer them to the ground once well sprouted and the ground has warmed. This has worked pretty well. This Spring, however, the tubers seemed dried out so when I planted the tubers in pots I also watered them. Bad decision. One rule of dahlia tubers is to NOT water them until they've sprouted. I lost a number of tubers because they rotted — a mistake I won't make again!

My second regret was my disappointing pepper and eggplant crop through most of the season. However, once late summer arrived and the temperatures cooled, the plants took off - quantity, size and quality was amazing! I was watering regularly all summer but the plants needed the cooler temperatures to thrive. Learning - be patient, and thanks to Mother Nature for coming through after all.



Garden Chat:

Catching up w/ the Yates County Master Gardeners!



Caroline

Not putting in drip irrigation for my garden like I meant to this spring. I spent the whole summer hauling hoses and buckets and thinking rain was right around the corner!

Dixon



Mine is that I did not inoculate my pole bean seeds before planting. I ran out of inoculant after planting my bush beans and didn't bother to get more before planting the pole beans since I was never convinced that inoculant actually did anything. Well, my bush beans did great and produced their usual high number of beans. The pole beans--which have always done really well, with very little care--languished and produced very few beans. Could just be a coincidence, but next year I will definitely not skip the inoculant.

Michelle



I should not have used old seeds in my Vegetable garden. They did not produce and were not healthy. Wasted space in my raised beds.

My second regret was letting my husband cut back the fall foliage. Many things were cut that should not have been. He used a gas powered hedge trimmer that ripped the stems instead of a nice clean cut. This may allow disease to get into the plant. I followed up with my hand pruners to correct the damage.

I will apply burlap to the remaining stubs and see what happens in the spring



Have a gardening question?

Contact us at 315-536-5123, or stop by the CCE-Yates County office and fill out one of our Master Gardener questionnaires!

What to do in the Winter

January

- * Start to plan your vegetable garden. Order seed early this year as demand may be higher than usual with a renewed interest in vegetable gardening due to the pandemic.
- * Do an inventory of your supplies for next summer. Look at expiration dates on pest control products and dispose of any that are out of date or look like they're degrading. How do you tell? Look for liquids separating and getting sludgy or changes in color. For dry products, consider disposing of anything that looks too clumpy.

February

- * Check your stored dahlia and other tubers and corms. Remove any that have dried out or started to rot.
- * Dust your large-leafed house plants to maximize photosynthesis. No need for sprays or oils, a lightly damp cloth will do the trick. For large plants, put them in the shower and give them a spray with cool water.
- * A mild day in February is a great time to prune your fruit trees.

March

- * Begin feeding your houseplants again. You may find yourself watering more as well as increased day length encourages active growth.
- * Sharpen and clean your tools to be ready for spring!
- * Cut pussywillow and forsythia branches and put in water inside your house to force into bloom.
- * Treat peach trees with a labeled copper spray to reduce peach leaf curl in spring 2021.
- * Begin pruning back ornamental grasses and other overwintered top growth to make room for the new sprouts.



Pictured: Forsythia Branches
Photo Credit: Rachel Graves

Getting An Early Start– Vegetables for Gardeners Who Can't Wait to Begin Growing!

Caroline Boutard-Hunt, CCE-Yates Ag Educator

One thing that I warn new gardeners about regularly is starting your vegetables too soon. Most vegetables and herbs can end up languishing if left in pots too long before planting out in the garden. Better to plant a week (or two) late than too early! However, some vegetables need extra time to grow into their own. These are a great option for anyone who just can't wait to get their vegetable garden started.

We'll go over some of these "early risers" from the easiest to grow as well as options for the gardener who likes a challenge. As usual, if you have any questions, feel free to reach out to the Master Gardeners at CCE Yates for gardening help and advice at (315) 536-5123.

Leeks and onions- Yes, you can buy onion and leek transplants from your local garden center but what's the fun in that? By growing your own you can try out a number of really interesting varieties that are not usually available as plants. Important: when choosing onion varieties for New York, make sure to select ones that are listed as long-day or intermediate varieties. These varieties will be best adapted to northern latitudes. A couple of my favorite varieties to grow include Rossa di Milano and Red Long of Tropea. No matter what varieties you choose, onions and leeks are simple to grow and a welcome addition to your garden.

Onions and shallots both need to be started in late February to early March. Broadcast the seeds in a flat, filled with potting mix and then cover with approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ " of soil. You can also start them in a plug tray with 2-3 seeds per cell. Keep the soil moist but not soggy and remain patient- they can take 10-14 days to germinate. You can transplant them to plug trays once they are up a few inches and if they look crowded, or just thin and continue to grow in the tray. Fertilize regularly. If your seedlings grow to about 5 inches tall and start to look leggy, just snip the tops back by half an inch. Transplant out in mid spring, they don't mind a light frost or two. Both onions and leeks transplant easily. Plant onions 2 to 4 inches apart in rows about a foot apart. Wider in-row spacing will usually give you larger onions.

Leeks can be planted deeply so that only one to two inches of leaves are exposed. This will provide you with a longer white shank (aka more useable leek). I

just use a narrow trowel or a dibble to make a small crevice and pop my plants in. No need to fill in the hole afterwards- it will fill in gradually as you water and weed. Plant 6" apart in rows 24" apart to allow room for the large tops. Leeks are quite hardy and can be harvested from the garden through early to mid-fall or dug for storage.



Photo Credit: nycgarden.blogspot.com



*FYI: Leeks can be planted deep!
Photo Credit: The Ellsworth American*

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Getting An Early Start– Vegetables for Gardeners Who Can't Wait to Begin Growing!



Photo Credit: Vegan Feast Catering



Photo Credit: Jeff Wright

Artichokes- If you're looking at something truly unique for your garden, try artichokes. Artichokes are technically perennials so you need to start them early then trick them into thinking they've gone through winter. Start seed 8-12 weeks before the last frost date for our area. Some go earlier but I always rely on Memorial Day as our "safe" planting date so I usually plan on seeding at the end of February.

Plant your seeds about 1/4 inch deep with 2-3 seeds to the cell if using flats. Once the seedlings are big enough to handle, very gently transplant them to 4-inch pots and grow for approximately 6-10 weeks. You can also just start them in 4" pots if you prefer. Keep your seedlings watered and fertilize with diluted fish emulsion or other fertilizer weekly, more if they start to look a little yellow. You want to transplant the seedlings into the garden before the last frost date so they can 'vernalize'.

Vernalization is providing a cold period to trick the plants into thinking they've been through winter. This will trigger artichokes into producing flower buds in their first year. Transplant out when low temperatures are still in the 40's and cover on nights when a frost is expected, at least 10 days before the last spring frost date for your area. Depending upon the variety, your artichoke plants will grow 1-3 feet tall and produce 1-2 large "primary" buds and quite a few smaller "secondary" buds, commonly called "baby artichokes".

The plants themselves are incredibly striking in the garden and if you don't pick the secondary buds, they will open up to form beautiful thistle flowers that can be cut and dried for indoor decoration. If you would like to try and grow artichokes as a perennial you can plant them in large pots (1/2 wine barrels work great) instead of in the ground. After the first frost or two move the pots in an unheated garage and water lightly about once a month through the winter. This will provide the plants with the cold period they need but protect them from getting too cold.



Fun Fact: Bees and other pollinators love artichoke flowers!
Photo Credit: Sfbaywalk on Flickr

Getting An Early Start– Vegetables for Gardeners Who Can't Wait to Begin Growing!

Celery and Celeriac- Everyone should grow celery once just to appreciate the sheer amount of work that it takes to grow a vegetable many of us treat as a glorified garnish. Celeriac, celery's easy-going cousin, is a unique, delicious vegetable in its own right and much easier for the average gardener to grow successfully. If you haven't tried it before, it's one of my favorite fall vegetables. You can grate it and mix it with a little lemon juice, Dijon mustard and mayonnaise to make an utterly delicious winter salad or cut it up and roast it, which gives you an amazing mild and sweet celery flavor with the texture reminiscent of roast potatoes. It is also great cooked and pureed.

Both celery and celeriac need to be started at least 10-12 weeks before transplanting. Sow in flats about 6 seeds/inch and 1/8 of an inch deep. Keep soil moist and warm (70 -78 degrees F) and be very patient, they'll take 2-3 weeks to germinate. Let the plants grow until they have two true leaves then very gently transplant into flats. I transplant into 1 ½ inch plug trays so they have a little room to grow. The seedlings are some of the slowest growing plants I can think of. Once a week I water with diluted fish emulsion. Plant out in the garden once temperatures are warm- at least 55 degrees consistently. Don't harden like other plants by putting outside in cooler temperatures as this can cause them to bolt (form flowers). Instead, gradually reduce water for 7-10 days before planting out.

Once planted in the garden water and feed regularly- the more you do, the sweeter the celery will be. Celery can be harvested once the stalks are of edible size. Celeriac is generally harvested in late summer or early fall when the root grows to about 3-5 inches in diameter. Use the tops to season soup or broth. It's a little stringy for fresh eating but full of that classic celery flavor.



Pictured: Celeriac (Celery's homely, but delicious cousin!)



*Pictured: Celery seedlings
Photo Credit: seedparade.co.uk*

How to Read Seed Packets

Dr. Leonard Perry (University of Vermont Extension)



Photo Credit: Gardener's Path

The colorful pictures and fanciful names on the seed packets at your garden center and in seed catalogs entice you to buy. But before you get carried away and select more varieties than you have space to plant, take a minute to read the packets and descriptions. There is much good cultural information in these, some of which may be unclear if you are new to gardening.

You may be surprised to learn that some of the flower and vegetable varieties for sale are not well suited to your particular location. Some grow best in a certain type of soil or shade conditions, or

need to be started indoors well in advance of planting. Start them too late, or just sown out in the garden, and you may get few if any flowers or fruit this season. So what do you look for on the packets and in catalog descriptions?

VARIETY-- Most packets and descriptions list the name of the variety (technically most are cultivars or cultivated varieties), and tell you if it is a hybrid. Hybrids come about from the crossing of other plant parents, and are often denoted as F1 or F2. This often gives a trait such as bigger flowers or more vigor. It is important to know if you want such traits, or if you want to collect seeds. If you collect seeds from a hybrid, they won't make the same plants. For this you would need the parent plants (often a seed company trade secret). To collect seeds that will come "true", you should look for "open pollinated" varieties.

TYPE-- Flowers also are identified as annuals, biennials, or perennials. Annuals are plants that grow, bloom, and die in one growing season. Biennials bloom the second year after planting and generally die after flowering. Perennials are those plants which come up year after year (if they are hardy). For perennials, many descriptions have or refer to a hardiness zone map so you can see if the plants will have a chance in your area.

DATE--For best results, buy only seed that is packed for the current year. The date is generally stamped on the back flap. Although you might be able to find seeds packaged for last year at a discounted price, these are probably not a good buy. Poor storage conditions will reduce the viability of seeds. If you do want to take a chance on these, sow 10 seeds in moist, rolled paper towel to see how many germinate.

GERMINATION--This percentage tells you how many seeds will produce plants under ideal conditions. However, keep in mind that the age of the seeds, how they've been stored, as well as how and when you plant them also will affect germination. Some seeds may need exposure to light to germinate. Some perennials may need special seed treatments prior to sowing. If you start seeds indoors in flats under ideal conditions, count on a slightly higher germination rate than if sowing directly outdoors. Descriptions often tell you which is best.

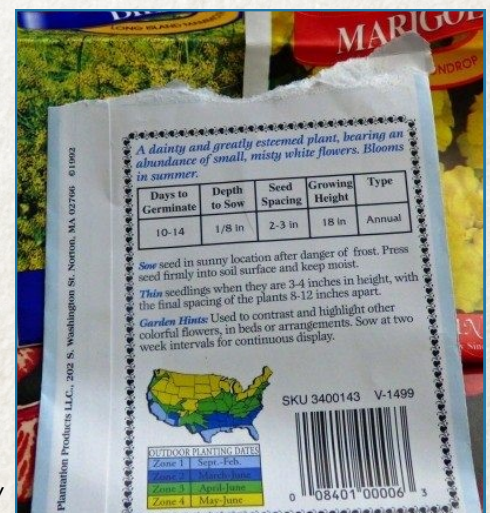


Photo Credit: Gardening Know How

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How to Read Seed Packets

CULTURE-- Most seed packets will contain information on how and when to plant, including the number of days to seed germination, and days to harvest for vegetables. Make sure if you see days listed that you know what they refer to—days from sowing to harvest, from planting out to harvest, or other. Packets also will note spacing requirements, height and spread at maturity, thinning instructions, growth habit, and special cultural considerations.

NUMBER OF SEEDS-- Unless you are buying bulk seeds by weight, you can be misled by the size and shape of the packaging. Be sure to check the weight, or more often number of seeds, to determine how much to buy. This is particularly important with higher priced seeds like geraniums that may only have five to ten seeds per packet. Some descriptions provide information on the length of row the packet will plant.

DESCRIPTION—Some parts of the plant description that may be important to you are whether the seeds are organic. If a vegetable, what are characteristics and shape and size and taste of the fruit? Is this variety resistant to diseases? This is especially important for some vegetables such as tomatoes, melons, and squash. Often specific diseases are listed with letters which can be found in a key or bottom of the page, such as “V” for verticillium disease resistance.

You may see logos with descriptions. These should have a key if in a catalog, often for such as easy, organic, new, or an award winner. The most common award you will see for some is the shield of All-America Selections winners. These are varieties that have proven among the best in certain regions, or nationwide, and can be found online:
www.all-americaelections.org/.

Also in descriptions, as in ads for other products, look for what “isn’t” said. In other words, if you want a trait such as good freezing for beans and this isn’t mentioned, this variety likely won’t freeze as well as others. On the other hand, be wary of glowing descriptions such as “the best taste in our trials”. Often I find most varieties offer the same superlatives, and what tastes good to one person isn’t as good to another. Look for traits that are most important to you, such as size of fruit, color of fruit or flowers, height of plant, the need or not for staking, yield, or time of flowering or ripening. While flavor is often the most desired trait of vegetables, color is often the most desired trait with flowers.

It bears repeating to have some sort of plan, or at least know how much space or how many pots you have, before buying seeds. It is so easy (speaking from experience) to be enticed by all the different varieties with colorful photos and glowing descriptions, ending up with several times as many seeds as you have the time or space to plant.

About the Author: This article was originally written by Dr. Leonard Perry, Extension Professor, University of Vermont (University of Vermont Extension, dept. of Plant and Soil Science).

Source Link: <http://bit.ly/2NhibDL>



Photo Credit: Gardner's Path



Perfect Plants for Problematic Places

We all have that spot in the garden. You know the one, where you've tried growing a few different things but because it's either too wet, dry, shady etc. nothing you plant really seems to thrive or even survive for long. Although some spots are more challenging than others, these can, with a little creativity and patience, become valued parts of your garden, all the prettier for their unique conditions. The key is that sometimes you have to give up on the plants you want to get the garden you'll love. Yes, you may have a passion for hostas but if you try and grow them in full sun and with regular deer traffic you'll always be working to keep them looking fine and most years you'll end up with sad looking plants despite all your efforts.

Here are a few of my personal favorites for all the toughest garden conditions I've dealt with living in the Finger Lakes. Since there are many options out there, I've also included links to other resources I've found with extensive plant lists.

Wet soils:

There are a lot of beautiful plants that love to have their feet wet. For spring color and lovely green, shiny foliage throughout the summer, plant native marsh marigolds. These grow quickly into large clumps and are striking en masse in the spring. Another great option is turtlehead (*Chelone* spp.) which comes in colors ranging from pure white to hot pink. *Chelone* will tolerate heavy clay soils and extremely wet, bog-like conditions. *Chelone* flowers in late summer and can bloom into September. It grows well in partial shade to sun into a neat two to four foot tall clump with attractive dark green, lanceolate leaves. You can trim the clump in mid spring for a shorter, bushier appearance.



Pictured: Buttonbush Flowers
Photo Credit: Gardencrossing.com

For shrubs, you have a lot of beautiful options as well, including the well-known red-twig dogwood and one of my personal favorites- *Cephalanthus occidentalis* L., commonly called buttonbush. Buttonbush thrives in wet spots, eventually growing into a large (5-8' tall and wide) attractive shrub with dark green, shiny leaves. What really sets buttonbush apart though are the unique flowers, which resemble white spiky balls. One of my favorite varieties is 'Sugar Shack', which has striking red fruit and grows to a diminutive 3-4 feet tall and wide.

For more plant choices, visit: <http://bit.ly/2KtkPoO>



Pictured: Gaillardia
Photo Credit: highcountrygardens.com

An area which gets salt in the winter:

Salt really helps us in the winter but it can seep into flowerbeds and lawns and cause a lot of damage. Luckily, quite a few plants can tolerate salt. Sedum and daylilies can tolerate both salt and hot, dry conditions so they're perfect for that "hell strip" along a building that tends to bake in the summer. Russian sage is another salt-tolerant large perennial that can add some quick height and mass to a border. Other options I've had success with are *Agastache* and Gaillardia, commonly called blanket flower. Both of these are extremely attractive to butterflies and other pollinators. If you have a spot which gets shade, hostas can tolerate a moderate amount of road salt as can hellebores.

Want more regionally adapted plants that tolerate salt? Visit the NYC Parks website for more great options: <http://on.nyc.gov/3iAfYPq>.

Perfect Plants for Problematic Places



Pictured: Hellebore spp.

Photo Credit: Pacific Horticulture Society

Dry Shade:

Tolerance for dry shade is defined as plants that won't need supplemental water most years after establishment. If you pop them in and forget them after an initial dowsing (like I frequently do) they'll probably survive but you'll have much more attractive plants if you water regularly for a few weeks until their roots are settled in. Hellebores and *Epimediums* are both fantastic flowering options for dry shade. Hellebores flower very early in the spring and last for months. Their leaves are practically evergreen in a mild location. Mine are still green and glossy in January. *Epimedium* has interesting foliage that forms a low mound with delicate flowers floating above on fine stems. I've had good luck with hostas. Yes, they will stay on the smaller side but I have grown them under large trees with minimal to no water and they looked nice all season long. 'Gold Standard' and 'Blue Mouse Ears' are two varieties that are tolerant of low moisture soils. Brunnera will also tolerate dry shade.

Really lean soil and a slope:

As I bike along the lake road I see a lot of gardeners putting a huge amount of work growing on steep slopes with a lot of shale. There is something to be said for perseverance but there are many beautiful plants that seem to thrive with neglect and love good drainage. Plants for slopes really deserve their own article, but your plants need to be able to establish quickly and put down roots that hold the soil in place. A couple of my favorite native shrubs for steep slopes include 'Gro-low' fragrant sumac (*Rhus aromatica*) and sweetfern (*Comptonia peregrina*). Fragrant sumac grows only 2-4 feet tall but will spread with suckers to cover an area about 10 feet wide. It tolerates poor soils and is an excellent option for erosion prevention. The 'Gro-low' cultivar grows only about 1-2 feet tall and about 8 feet wide. An added benefit- fragrant sumac

leaves resemble poison ivy so if you have a spot where people take a short cut across your property then this can help if planted strategically! Sweetfern is not edible and not a fern but besides that is a tough and attractive native plant that can grow in very difficult situations.

If you're looking for a shorter groundcover, one of my favorites is Canadian anemone (*Anemone canadensis*) which rapidly spreads and fills in available space. It does not require high fertility however it will appreciate regular watering in dry years.

Black walnut tree:

Black walnuts release a compound called juglone, which can kill or stunt plants growing within its dripline. Many plants are tolerant to juglone and can be used to underplant. European wild ginger (*Asarum europaeum*) forms a lovely, low and slow-growing mass of glossy leaves. It may be used within a bed or as a ground cover with patience. Bleeding heart (*Decentra spectabilis*) and Chelone spp. are also very tolerant of juglones.

For an extensive list of plants that can happily coexist with black walnut please visit:

<http://bit.ly/2XUkH4R>



Pictured: Decentra Spectabilis.

Photo Credit: gardenia.net

Deer and other furry miscreants:

Many of our choices above are quite resistant to herbivory by rabbits and deer. However, you will always have the deer with unusual tastes who may nibble on a plant that has been considered unpalatable. Some ferns such as bracken fern and lady ferns are good choices along woodland-edges to add interest. There are too many great plants to list but out of the choices above I've had excellent luck with marsh marigolds, hellebores and Agastache in places with heavy rabbit and deer populations.

For a long list of options, please visit:

<http://bit.ly/3a1BjNV>.

Forcing Flowering Branches

Dr. Leonard Perry (University of Vermont Extension)

Trick your spring-flowering trees and shrubs into thinking it's spring this winter, and into blooming. This is what you do by cutting branches and bringing indoors. The process is called "forcing."

Trees and shrubs, which bloom in spring, form their flower buds the previous fall. After at least eight weeks of cold outdoors (under 40 degrees F), their branches are capable of blooming if you provide the right conditions. To make sure they receive enough cold, don't cut branches until after January 1 in a "normal" year or after January 15 in a "mild" year. Branches harvested in late winter often come into bloom indoors sooner than those harvested earlier.

Carefully prune out branches so not to injure the plant or ruin its shape. Use sharp pruners, and cut branches at least 12 inches long. Select branches with a large number of flower buds. These are often on younger branches. Make sure you are looking at flower buds and not leaf buds. The flower buds are usually larger and rounder. If in doubt, cut a few buds open to look for leaf or flower parts inside. Branches force more readily if cut on a sunny afternoon or when temperatures are above freezing.

Bring the cut branches indoors, placing the stem ends immediately in water. If branches are in a bucket, mist them frequently the first few days or enclose in a plastic bag out of direct sun. If possible, submerge the whole stems in water, such as in a bathtub, overnight. This allows buds and stems to quickly absorb water and begin to break dormancy.

The old recommendation was to smash the stem ends with a hammer to improve water uptake by the stems. Sometimes this works, but it may have the opposite effect if stems are mashed too hard. And the mashed ends may make the water more dirty, which will decrease water uptake. The best method is to make a slit or two in the bottom of the stem before placing in the water, such as in a cross or star pattern as viewed from the bottom.

Keep branches in a bucket of water in a cool area (60 to 65 degrees F). Warmer temperatures cause buds to develop too rapidly and not open properly. Change the water every 2 to 3 days to ensure it stays clean.

Low humidity, common in many homes in winter, also may cause buds to fall off. Try to keep branches near a humidifier, or misted. Direct

sunlight also may cause buds to fall, so keep in bright but indirect light.

Once the flower buds show color, the branches can be used in arrangements. Use of floral preservatives, available at many garden stores and florists, may increase the life of the branches (the "vase life"). Once again, keep stems in bright, but indirect, light. Moving arrangements to a cool location at night (40 to 60 degrees F) will help them last longer.

For cutting as early as January, consider the Cornelian Cherry (yellow flowers, 2 weeks to force into bloom), Forsythia (yellow flowers, one to 3 weeks to force), Witch Hazel (yellow flowers, one week to force), Poplar (long lasting, drooping flowers called "catkins," 3 weeks to force), and Willow (catkins, 2 weeks to force).



Pictured: Cornelian Cherry (Cornus Mas)
Photo Credit: B. Navez



Pictured: Witch Hazel (Hamamelis)
Photo Credit: Neptuul

Forcing Flowering Branches

Dr. Leonard Perry (University of Vermont Extension)

In February, consider these same plants plus the Red Maple (pink to red unusual flowers followed by leaves, 2 weeks to force), Alder (catkins, one to 3 weeks to force), Amelanchier or Serviceberry (white flowers, one to 3 weeks to force), Apples and Crabapples (white, pink and red flowers, 2 to 4 weeks to force with doubles slower than singles), Birch (long lasting catkins, 2 to 4 weeks to force), Quince (red to orange flowers, 4 weeks to force), Cherries (white and pink flowers, 2 to 4 weeks to force), Rhododendrons and Azaleas later in the month (many colors, 4 to 6 weeks to force), and Pussy Willow (well-known furry flowers, one to 2 weeks to force).

Then in March, consider cutting branches of Hawthorns (white, pink or red flowers, 4 to 5 weeks to force) but be careful of the thorns, Deutzia (white flowers, 3 to 4 weeks to force), Honeysuckle shrub (white to pink flowers, 2 to 3 weeks to force), Mock Orange (white flowers, 4 to 5 weeks to force), Oaks (catkins, 2 to 3 weeks to force), Lilacs (many colors, 4 to 5 weeks to force), and Spirea (white flowers, 4 weeks to force with double flowers lasting longer).

Cut various branches, at various times, for a succession of blooms and color indoors during our long winters. It is one way to help spring come early in the North!



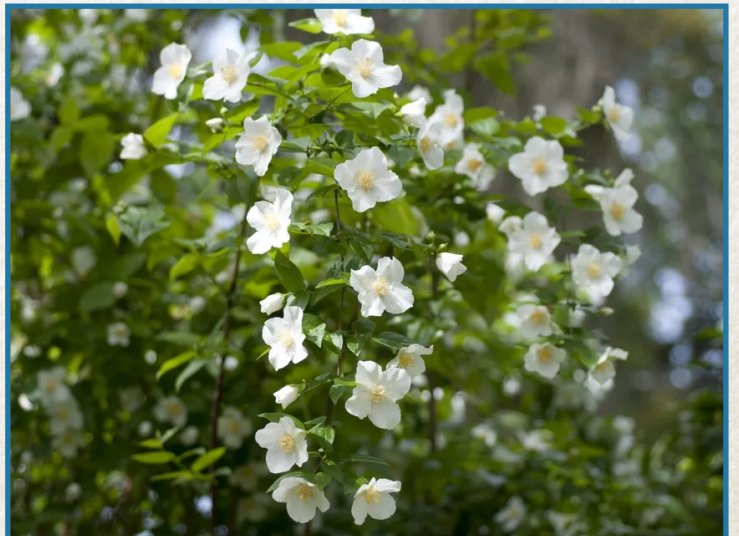
Pictured: White Alder
Photo Credit: National Parks Service



Pictured: Serviceberry
Photo Credit: Leticia Almeida



Pictured: English Hawthorn
Photo Credit: Gardening Know How



Pictured: Mock Orange
Photo Credit: Georgianna Lane

Upcoming Events

Gardening Matters Day

Time and Date: 10:00 am-12:00 pm Saturday, May 8th
Location: Abandon Brewery
2994 Merritt Hill Rd
Penn Yan, NY 14527

The event will be held in the outside pavilion and will be limited to 20 attendees with masks required to best maintain safe social distancing. Although we won't be able to offer food and beverages this year, you'll still receive our "Garden in a Bag" collection of free vegetable, herb and flower seeds!

You can also place an order for our plant sale and pick up at the event.



We will have a variety of talks from our very own Master Gardeners on subjects including:

- **Container Vegetable Gardening**
- **Growing for Pollinators and Wildlife**
- **How to install drip irrigation in an ornamental garden**
- **A discussion panel with a chance to ask your gardening questions**
- **And more!**

Cost: Pay what you can afford sliding scale from \$0-\$25. Proceeds go towards supporting CCE Yates and the CCE Yates Master Gardening program.

Pre-registration is required to attend. For more information or to RSVP, please call the CCE-Yates County office at (315) 536-5123 or e-mail Caroline Boutard-Hunt at cb239@cornell.edu

Master Gardener of Yates County Plant Sale!

The plant sale will take place immediately after our Gardening Matters Day at 1:00 pm at Abandon Brewery.

The Master Gardeners will be selling a variety of plants including native and pollinator-friendly perennials. Follow Cornell Cooperative Extension of Yates County on Facebook or contact Caroline at cb239@cornell.edu to receive more information. We will be providing those who wish to attend the plant sale with several socially distanced options including the ability to pre-order for curbside pick-up.

Master Gardener Volunteer Training - Online for 2021!

Have you been interested in becoming a Master Gardener but the required weekday trainings made it an impossibility? This year we are trialing a regional online training program which will allow for more flexibility. Participants will interact and attend lectures via Moodle, an online teaching platform. In-person outdoor skills trainings will be provided monthly along with volunteer opportunities. Training begins August 8th and will run through November.

Cost of the program is on a sliding scale. For more information on the Master Gardener Program, please contact Caroline Boutard-Hunt cb239@cornell.edu or (315) 536-5123.

About Us

The Master Gardener Program is a national program of trained volunteers who work in partnership with their county Cooperative Extension Office to share information throughout the community.

Master Gardeners are neighbors teaching neighbors about landscapes, vegetables, fruits, herbs, houseplants, beneficial and harmful insects, plant diseases, integrated pest management, wildlife management, soils, birds, composting, water conservation, and much much more.



Master Gardeners are considered researchers rather than experts. They participate in 40 hours of training provided by experienced staff from Cornell Cooperative Extension to gain a basic understanding of horticulture and available horticultural information and online resources. Course topics include plant nutrition, soils, vegetable, fruit culture, trees, shrubs, lawns, diseases and insects that affect plants, pruning and more.

You don't need to be an expert to join, if you enjoy gardening as a hobby, this may be perfect for you.

To become a Master Gardener, all you need to do is attend a 10-week training offered by Cornell Cooperative Extension.

For more information, please call us at 315-536-5123!

Cornell Cooperative Extension Yates County

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<http://yates.cce.cornell.edu>

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