

Dutchess Dirt

A monthly gardening newsletter from
Cornell Cooperative Extension
Dutchess County



Mark your calendars! Set a Reminder!

**The Master Gardener Volunteer plant sale is scheduled for Friday,
May 19 (10-4) and Saturday, May 20 (9-2).**

**It will be held on the front lawn of the Dutchess County Farm &
Home Center at 2715 Route 44, Millbrook.**

CCEDC 2023 MGV Spring Plant Sale May 19 & 20

**By Joyce Tomaselli, CCEDC Community Horticulture Resource
Educator**

Shop a wonderful selection of healthy annuals (both flowering and foliage), perennials, vegetables, and herbs grown by our Master Gardener volunteers. To

help you plan your shopping, you can view the photos of the plants and a summary of their characteristics at our [Spring Plant Sale Preview](#). Sort by name (botanical or common), or type (e.g. vegetable) or icon (e.g. attracts pollinators). Lists of plants are also at CCEDutchess.org/gardening/spring-plant-sale. You can make a shopping list ahead of time or just shop when you arrive.

When you make your plans, think carefully (and honestly) about your hopes and the plants' needs. Plants labeled "Full Sun" require 6 hours or more of sun each day. Plants labeled "Shade" thrive in 2 hours or less daily. The western afternoon sun is hotter than the eastern morning sun so you might not want to plan a "Part Shade" plant in 4 hours of western sun. If you're not sure about the amount of sun you receive, set a timer and every two hours go outdoors and look for sun and shade.



Especially if you're new to the area, verify your hardiness rating. The USDA Plant Hardiness map for Dutchess County shows the northern half is **5b** (-15 to -10 °F) and the southern half is **6a** (-10 to -5 °F). But note the area of **5a** (-20 to -15 °F) in the northwest corner. Also consider whether your growing area is sheltered from wind, if it may have low spots where colder temperatures linger or if it is near the Hudson whose water temperature can affect air temperature. Sometimes you can sneak in a plant which is less hardy than your growing area but it's sad when "normal" cold weather kills the plant.

Read the plant label and the MGVS signs created for each plant which note the height, spread, bloom time and color, or fruit time and characteristics. Note the other attributes cited including the amount of sun required, native to New York, drought tolerant, attractive to pollinators and deer resistant.



Are you planning a new garden? Make sure to check for any potential obstructions above or below ground. (This writer can admit digging up the cable feed to the house...more than once).

Consider drainage, the slope of the land and be sure there is easy access to water. And if a tree is labeled for a height of 50 feet, it will in fact, grow that tall! Are you adding plants to an existing landscape? Verify much room you really have and the mature height and spread of the plants you're considering.

Do you want to attract more pollinators? First, realize that there are many types (e.g., bees, wasps, flies, beetles, butterflies and moths, hummingbirds and even the occasional spider) which have different habitats and needs. Many depend on plants for pollen and nectar, but they also use them for shelter and nesting sites. Note that a variety of flower shapes and bloom time will attract pollinators with different mouthparts and body sizes throughout the growing year. Then, know that landscapes with trees, shrubs, perennials, and annuals planted close together harbor a wider variety and larger numbers of pollinators, especially if they are large swaths of the same flowers planted in groupings. Finally, plan a sequence of blooms for all season. Native plants are good for specialist pollinators, but non-native plants are good for generalist pollinators and can also extend the bloom season. Consider adding some structures which provide protection from wind and hiding places from predators.

Read more at [CCE Putnam's Pollinator Pathway](#) webpage.

While you plan, imagine all the growing going in on Millbrook. The greenhouse is full. The hoop house is full. Every inch available is full, waiting for you to come shopping Friday May 19, 10-4 & Saturday May 20, 9-2, rain or shine.



Volunteers will be available during the plant sale to answer gardening questions, to help make plant selections and to help bring plants to cars if needed.

We depend on the continued success of the plant sale to continue our educational programming. Your support is needed and greatly appreciated.

See you soon!

Grow What You Love

Liselotte Vince, Master Gardener Intern, Class 2022

Seed catalogues always seem to arrive in my mailbox at the right time. They appear just when enough time has passed between the last growing season and just before you are ready to fully think about the following one. I start out by flipping through them just for fun, dog-eared anything that might look interesting to grow. I daydream about feeding my family healthy and delicious homegrown



vegetables.

Life happens and several weeks go by before I realize that our last frost date is rapidly approaching and I have yet to place an order. I frantically go online, hoping that I am not too late and haven't missed out on my favorite seeds. The end result is that I end up ordering way too many seeds, because hey, why not!



Let's fast forward to August. The five zucchini plants you bought at the garden center or started from seed are all producing fruit. You blink and your zucchini can now be used as a lethal weapon. Friends and neighbors avoid you as they don't want another one of your zucchinis. Your tomato plants are producing tomatoes faster than you can eat them. You stop going into your vegetable garden as the entire situation has become overwhelming. Sound familiar?

This year, I am trying something new in terms of what I will grow. I have asked myself these three questions:

1. Do I like eating this vegetable? Does my family like eating this vegetable? If you are the only one who likes eating tomatoes, you may not need 10 tomato plants, maybe 4 will be sufficient. If everyone loves tomatoes then by all means, buy or grow those plants.
2. Does this vegetable do well in my garden or has it failed for the last few years I have tried to grow it? I have tried to grow cauliflower unsuccessfully for years. I don't use pesticides in my garden, so without fail, the cabbage moth makes an appearance before I remember to put on row covers, and the entire crop is destroyed. So, I have decided that it's just not worth the effort to grow cauliflower. I am more than happy to give that space to another plant which does do well and buy cauliflower from the farmer's market or grocery store.
3. Does my harvest all mature at the same time? This is an overwhelming feeling to me, so much so that I get frustrated with the amount of food I am wasting. This year, to avoid that feeling of despair, I have picked a selection of crops that I know my family loves so less is wasted. I have also chosen crops that mature at different times of the growing season.

I realized that I was growing things because they looked appealing in the seed catalogues. I was growing them because I had this idea in my head that my family and I would sit down to these delicious home grown meals every night.

Turns out, only three of us like tomatoes, no one likes zucchini and the rattlesnake beans were left on the plate.

It was time to pivot to a new growing plan for 2023 which now looks like this:

Early season harvest:

- Lettuces
- Sugar snaps
- Rhubarb
- Radishes



Mid season harvest:

- Potatoes
- Beans
- Kale
- Fall planted garlic
- Fall planted shallots
- Cucumbers
- Herbs

Late season harvest:

- Tomatoes
- Potatoes
- Peppers
- Kale
- Herbs



This growing plan feels manageable to me. There are lots of amazing farmers markets dotted around Dutchess County so I am happy to support local farms and buy any vegetables that I am not growing myself. It's a win win situation.

Now I just need to tell myself I don't need to sow the entire seed packet of tomatoes.

Wish me luck.

Winter Sowing

Mary Sokolowski, Master Gardener Intern, Class 2022

It was January in southern Dutchess County and like all gardeners I know, I was itching to get things growing. I didn't yet have a greenhouse or hoop house, so I researched my options. Winter sowing seemed like a good idea.

Winter sowing is a germination method formally started by Trudi Davidoff in Nassau County, New York sometime in the early 2000s. The method continues to develop through a vibrant online community, including two Winter Sowing Groups on Facebook (one of which focuses on vegetables). In a nutshell, Trudi Davidoff pioneered the method because she had little indoor space and few financial resources. These two founding principles underlie much of the information available about the method since gardeners are encouraged to use recycled containers as miniature greenhouses. In my case, that meant hauling out the plastic shoeboxes that I had lying around from previous organizational projects. Winter-sowers are known for creatively using variety of materials; one-gallon plastic milk jugs are a favorite. The idea is to use something that will allow for 3-4 inches of potting soil and enough headspace to accommodate the seedlings until they are ready for harvest or transplant.

Winter sowing is not only beneficial but also necessary for some native perennial flowers to successfully germinate due to the process of cold seed stratification. I am more of a vegetable gardener so I planted my favorite cold-tolerant varieties: lettuce mixes, wild arugula, beets, broccoli raab, kale, swiss chard, kailaan (Chinese broccoli), tetragonia (New Zealand spinach), wasabina (mustard greens), and carrots.

Unfortunately, I did not record the date that my first seeds produced some green sprouts, but I would estimate it as about mid-February. By mid-March I had substantial growth on a few plants and by April 8 I transplanted my first winter sown seedling: broccoli raab. I planted the remainder of the seedlings the following week. In retrospect, I could probably have made these transplants a bit earlier, but I erred on the side of caution: I wanted to eat some successfully winter sown veggies and was more than usually determined not to damage them!

The most successful plants I started using this method were the mustard greens, kailaan, and lettuces, but I do have seedlings that are growing far beyond their direct-seeded peers, including arugula and lacinato kale. I even transplanted two very tiny beets and one carrot!

I absolutely plan to refine and continue this method next year. There were many benefits: the mere act of planting seeds in the middle of January felt good for my physical and mental health. I think many other gardeners can also relate to the childlike sense of wonder and curiosity about whether and when these seeds would sprout and the observational process enhanced my joy in those winter months. Winter sowing is also an economical and space saving method to get a jump start on some of your cold-hardy crops if do not have space or resources for a greenhouse, cold-frame or hoop house. The method also supports gardeners in the use and re-use of materials, including containers and seeds. As for harvest, while I have yet to make a full meal or even a side dish from my winter sown vegetables, it was a genuine thrill to cut back that first broccoli raab floret and pop it right into my mouth. Just last night for dinner, I used some of these crops more like herbs, chopping up a small amount of greens and tossing them into a veggie pasta dish with some overwintered oregano. Delicious!



Starting Seeds in January

I used upcycled storage boxes with good quality potting soil. I drilled holes for venting and rainwater/snow melt, as well as drainage. The rule of thumb is to lightly water the seeds once they are sown. I think some seeds required more water than the small holes allowed and I will work on that next year. Later in the season, some of the containers grew some moss or algae, but this did not seem to hurt the plants. As soon as the days became more temperate I began removing the lids for greater air flow.



Labelling your containers is good winter-sowing practice.



I found a spot with great winter sun and a little protection from curious critters who might want to knock these containers over.



Broccoli raab transplant compared to it's direct sown peers



Mustard Greens, kale, and arugula



For the sake of comparison, here are the direct sown arugula and mustard greens on April 19

UPCOMING CLASSES & EVENTS:

Adriance Memorial Library CCEDC Sustainable Home Gardening Best Practices June 13, 20, 27 at 6:30- 8pm

Learn how to garden more sustainably. This class will demonstrate approaches which maximize positive impacts to our environment by adopting improved gardening practices. Presented by Cornell Cooperative Extension of Dutchess County Master Gardeners at the Adriance Charvat meeting room. 93 Market St, Poughkeepsie, NY 12601. For more information contact Krista Miller (845) 485-3445 x3366 or kmiller@poklib.org.

Registration is required for each session.

June 13: Intro, Soil Health, and Water Management [Register](#)

June 20: Biodiversity, Plant Selection and Pollinators [Register](#)

June 27: Tools, Climate Change and Summary [Register](#)

ARTICLES OF INTEREST

[Sun, Earth, Life, and the Seasons: Phenology](#)

[Does the Soil on a Baseball Field Influence the Players?](#)

[Right at Home: Grow Your Own!](#)

[NYS IPM What's Bugging You First Friday Web Seminars](#)

MASTER GARDENERS SPEAKERS BUREAU

Master Gardener Volunteers offer lectures on a wide array of subjects for gardeners. Favorite topics include: Vegetable Gardening; Pollinator Gardens; Home Composting; Sustainable Gardening Best Practices; Gardening in Small Spaces; Deer Defense; Bulbs for All Seasons; Spotted Lanternfly; Jumping Worms, Putting the Garden to Bed in Fall; and Nature in Winter. Additional topics can be prepared to meet a particular group's needs or interests. Most of these topics are available to be delivered in person or online.

The talks are 45 minutes in duration, followed by 10-15 minutes for questions from the group. A fee of \$75 per lecture (or 3 for \$200) helps support our numerous community projects. To arrange for a speaker, and details of offerings, contact Joyce Tomaselli at jdt225@cornell.edu

UPCOMING LIBRARY & GARDEN CLUB TALKS:

Tuesday, May 2, 6:30 pm, Pleasant Valley Library, 1584 Main St, Pleasant Valley, NY 12569. "Home Composting and its Benefits" by CCEDC Community Horticulture Resource Educator Joyce Tomaselli. For more information go to PleasantValleyLibrary.org.

Saturday, May 6, 10am, Millbrook Library, 3 Friendly Ln, Millbrook, NY 12545. "Basic

Garden Design” by CCEDC Master Gardener Philomena Kiernan. For more information and to register visit MillbrookLibrary.org

Thursday, May 11, 7 pm, Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies “**Stressed Out Soils: A Conversation**” with [Jane Lucas](#), an ecologist researching threats facing soils, and how they can be understood and managed in the face of global change. Offered in-person at the IES Lovejoy Auditorium, 2801 Sharon Turnpike, Millbrook, NY 12545 and virtually. For more information and to RSVP [click here](#).

Thursday, May 11, 6pm, Beekman Library, 11 Town Center Blvd, Hopewell Junction, NY 12533, “**Deer Defense**” by CCEDC Master Gardener Volunteer Mary Nisley. For more information and to register, go to BeekmanLibrary.org

Monday, May 15, 6:30 pm, Pleasant Valley Library, 1584 Main St, Pleasant Valley, NY 12569. “**A Celebration of Trees**” by CCEDC Community Horticulture Resource Educator Joyce Tomaselli. For more information go to PleasantValleyLibrary.org.

Friday May 19, 10-4 and Saturday May 20, 9-2, CCEDC spring Plant Sale, 2715 Route 44, Millbrook NY 12545. [Click here](#) to view the plants and their characteristics and for lists of all the plants. Volunteers will be available during the plant sale to answer gardening questions, to help make plant selections and to bring plants to cars if needed. For more information contact Joyce Tomaselli jdt225@cornell.edu.

Friday and Saturday, June 2 and 3, 10-5, the Rhinebeck Reformed Church garden and plant sale at 6368 Mill St, Rhinebeck, NY 12572. Plants donated from local businesses or dug from local gardens will be offered as well as garden decorations, furniture and planters. Vendor space is available. For more information contact Brenda Klaproth at bklaproth@gmail.com (845-309-3181) or Nancy Katrulya at (914-489-2001).

Saturday, June 3, 10am, Millbrook Library, 3 Friendly Ln, Millbrook, NY 12545. “**Become a Gardening Detective**” by CCEDC Community Horticulture Resource Educator Joyce Tomaselli. For more information and to register visit MillbrookLibrary.org

SUBMIT UPCOMING EVENTS

Would you like information on an upcoming gardening event to be shared in this newsletter?

Send an email to:

Francheska Kuilan at fk232@cornell.edu or Joyce Tomaselli jdt225@cornell.edu by the 25th of each month to be included in the next month’s newsletter.

Please include the date, time, location, a short description, cost and contact information for more details.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Our office is now open to the public, but staff are working from home some days. Please make pre-arrangements before bringing soil or diagnostic samples to the office. Please email Francheska Kuilan at fk232@cornell.edu for forms and instructions.

***Need Soil pH Testing? Need Lawn or Plant Diagnosis?
Have any gardening questions?***

The **Horticulture Hotline**, (845) 677-5067 is closed for the season. Diagnostics questions can be left for Joyce Tomaselli at 845-677-8223 ext. 134 or emailed to jdt225@cornell.edu. Written questions can be submitted to our website at www.CCEDutchess.org/gardening. Click on Contact Us and select the topic of Gardening. If a photograph is included, please ensure it is focused and as close up as possible.

Samples for identification or diagnosis can be submitted all year long. Please contact our office at 845-677-8223 or email fk232@cornell.edu to arrange sample drop-off. There is a \$15 fee for samples. Visit our [Horticulture Diagnostic Lab website](http://www.CCEDutchess.org/gardening) for reliable resources and information on our services.



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MONTHLY ID QUIZ

Last Month:



Should a mushroom be growing in a potted house plant? Can you identify it?

The parking lot at our office is covered with light fluffy material. Do you know what it is?

Answer: Sycamore seeds from a nearby tree



[Click Here To Help Spread The Dirt!](#)

If you need a little chuckle for the next Dutchess Dirt, here are a few gardening corny jokes🤪

Did you hear about the flower who went on a date with another flower?
It's a budding romance! ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

How come flowers don't like riding bicycles?
They keep losing their petals! ☐ ☐

What do you call a mushroom who is the life of the party?
A FUN-gi! ☐

[Read Previous Editions of Dutchess Dirt](#)



Websites mentioned in Dutchess Dirt are provided as a courtesy to our readers. Mention of these websites does not imply endorsement by Cornell University, Cornell Cooperative Extension or by the author.

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Cornell Cooperative Extension Dutchess County | The Farm and Home Center, 2715 Route 44,
Suite 1, Millbrook, NY 12545

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