

# THE SAGE GARDENER

VOLUME 8, ISSUE 3

MARCH 2011

## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK.....TERRY MARCOTTE

Greetings from the "Rock" ranch; Cheer up spring is close

How about giant KUDOS to our own Historian Jo Anne Arzillo. Has any not seen her at every function that Master Gardeners have put on taking pictures regardless of where it is located or time. THANK YOU so much for all the Scrapbooking and photographing you do for us Jo Anne.

With the training for the new Master Gardeners wrapping up at the end of this month, I would like everyone to consider becoming a mentor for one of the new "graduates". There are seven whom have been very diligent in their work and learning. By one of you mentoring a trainee insures the future and continued success of our organization. We further their education as well as our own by doing so for the trainees. They will be present at our April meeting to receive their certificates. It would be great for all that can be there to welcome each one of them into the group

I know we are all busy this time of year with spring projects and our own grades and such. It doesn't take much more than a phone call or email, or even a occasional visit to give a feeling of being a part of the group.

I will be asking for volunteers to help be Mentors. From my own experience of having a mentor it was good to have a go-to person with questions they might have for themselves or one of their friends or neighbors.

From my new diggings at the Rock Ranch. It is just that good Wyoming rock and clay. Working on a hoop house and raised beds and planting trees for wind-breaks. Future plans have fruit trees and grape vines in the plans. As with all our gardens and such much organic matter is required. Here is a picture looking out across the yard, early spring 09.



## 'Upcoming' Meetings

- **February 1 to March 31:** Master Gardener Trng.: @ 6:30-9:00 pm Tuesday & Thursday; Alternate Trng. Cody/Powell
- **February 15 to April 5** Weekly (Tuesday's) Brown Bag Seminars; Park County Courthouse @ 12:05 to 12:50 pm
- **March 9 to April 27** Weekly (Wednesday's) Brown Bag Seminars; Powell Library @ 12:00 to 1:00 pm
- **April 8:** Westside school @ the Greenhouse; 8:45 to 10:45 am
- **April 15:** Parkside school @ the Greenhouse; 11:00 am to 1:00 pm
- **April 4:** General MG membership; @ 7:00pm, Powell
- **May 13:** WY MG Assoc. Mtg. @ Torrington



## MEETING MINUTES...KAREN ANDERSON

President Terry Marcotte convened the meeting in Cody @ 7:00 p.m. in the EOC Room, basement of the Park County Courthouse.

### Attendance

Bob Prchal, Suzanne Larsen, Rita Lewis, Donna Haman, JoAnne Arzillo, Kendra Morris, Joyce Johnston, Ronda McLean, Ann Hinckley, Rhonda Faulkner, Mary Vogel, Nancy Ryan, Dan Wasp and Terry Marcotte

### Approval of Minutes

The February minutes were amended to include the Spring festival at Canal Park on June 4 from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm. Members were urged to grow something "deer proof" for the plant sale. PCMG's will also be reimbursed for the seeds they use/purchase. Minutes were approved as amended.

### Treasurer's Report

Treasurer, Mickey Waddell resigned her position due to health concerns. The Treasurer's report included a bill form Darlene Manning for flowers (Cheryl Wright). A formal report was not submitted nor approved. Darlene Manning was nominated to fill the remainder of the Treasurer's term. Terry will contact Darlene to see if she is willing to accept the nomination.

### Old Business

- The paperwork for an additional Scholarship that was approved in February has been completed by Northwest College. Applications are being accepted and two (2) recipients will be selected later this spring for Fall enrollment.
- The **Spring festival** is scheduled at Canal Park for June 4 from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm. There will be a Plant Sale, Educational talks and/or demonstrations by MG's and Cookies or a snack of some sort for sale. Bring lawn chairs as there are no places to sit currently or available at the Park.

### New Business

#### Announcements

- **Park County Weed and Pest** is presenting a Grasshopper workshop at the Cody Library on March 23 at 9:00 a.m. The fee is \$5.00 to cover the cost of a lunch. Pre-registration is advised. Call Park County Weed & Pest @ 527-1840 in Cody or 754-8884 in Powell.
- **Arbor Day** activities were discussed for both Cody and Powell. Follow-up fliers will provide details.
- Nancy Ryan provided a list of 'Gardening Books' available at the County Libraries.
- **Brown Bag luncheon Seminars** have been scheduled in both Powell and Cody during March and April. Attending these forums will count toward your education hours. Times, days, and subjects can be obtained at the Extension Offices if you missed the e-mails about this.

### Reminders

- If any members are not receiving the Newsletter please check **YOUR** "e" mail address. If it has changed provide your new email address to Julie @ the Cooperative Extension Office. Her email address is: [jalley1@uwyo.edu](mailto:jalley1@uwyo.edu).
- Articles for the newsletter need to be in by **the first Monday** following the meeting.
- Next meeting will be **April 4, 2011 in Powell**. The monthly education program will be presented by **Dan Wasp**.

**Adjournment...** Meeting adjourned @ 7:30 p.m.



## EXTENSION MUSINGS...JOYCE JOHNSTON AND ANN HINCKLEY



There are plenty of garden activities to entertain you in March, just in time to pull you out of your winter cabin fever. Get out the starting mix and plant your **tomatoes and peppers** so they will be ready to set out after the last frost date (May 15, on average). Heirloom varieties of tomatoes are a good choice. They have excellent flavor and high acidity, qualities you want especially for canning—and you can save the seeds when you find a variety you especially like. Trim back those geraniums you have been wintering over in the house so they will be sturdy, bushy plants when you set them out in May. There is an interesting idea for starting perennials and hardy annuals outdoors right now in milk jugs made into mini-greenhouses. For the whole story, including a how-to video go to <http://www.northerngardening.com/> This is from Priscilla Williams at U.W.

As soon as you can get a shovel into the ground you can make the holes for new shrubs, trees and fruit trees you are planning to put in this Spring. Put the dirt in a wheel barrow or pile to one side. Do not add fertilizer or compost to the planting hole. This creates a false environment for the tree and it won't spread its roots out widely in search of nutrients. After planting you can add a compost mulch, leaving a few inches bare next to the trunk to avoid rodent damage. Dig the hole big enough to accommodate the roots when they are spread out. When deciding on placements for these plants check the micro climates around your area. Avoid planting in "cold pockets" where the frost will settle and damage tender plants that wouldn't be affected if planted elsewhere. Check the Extension Office for suggestions of trees, shrubs, and fruit trees that grow well in this area.

This is also a **good time to prune**, before the sap rises again. Use sharp side-by-side pruners, not the anvil type. Disinfect the pruners after each cut with a spray of alcohol. The old system of dipping or wiping with bleach promotes rust on the tools. If you plan to harvest scion wood, now is the time for that as well.

The National Gardening Association bulletin suggest some low maintenance plants you can consider if you have spaces in your landscaping. **Daylilies** have a good track record here. There are hundreds of cultivars to choose from so you can find those that do best in your area and bloom at different times of the year. They need some attention in removing old blossoms and will eventually have to be thinned, but otherwise they come as close to no-maintenance as we can get. Durable **bearded iris** are another suggestion for low maintenance perennials, or **Siberian iris**, which are more resistant to insect invasions. Siberian iris can also be used in low spots or beside ponds as they like a little extra water. Iris do not bloom for long periods but their foliage is attractive during the whole growing season.

One of the question coming to Joyce this month was what to plant over a leach field. She recommends **squash or rhubarb** or similar plants requiring extra water for good growth as they will cope well with the water produced in a leach field.

*~Happy gardening~*

## GETTING TO KNOW YOU... PROFILE OF DAN WASP



- **How long have you lived in Park County?** 5 1/2 years

- **What do you enjoy about living in this part of Wyoming?**

I enjoy the beauty and sense of wonder that the mountains and nature have to offer. Moving from the NYC metro area, I appreciate the slower pace and genuine people.

- **What aspect of your job OR retirement gives you the most satisfaction?**

Working and interacting with colleagues and working together to problem-solve.

- **What do you do to relax?**

Spending time with my family is what really counts. When I'm not doing that, I enjoy hiking, nature photography, and of course, gardening. All three of these contribute to my interest in creating naturalistic landscapes.

- **When did you start gardening and who inspired you?**

I started gardening when we bought our first house in 1975. I built my first pond and started my first vegetable garden. I guess my biological background and love of nature were my inspirations.

- **What is your gardening motto?**

If you don't get your hands dirty, you haven't realized the full satisfaction of gardening.

- **How long have you been a Master Gardener?**

I saw an ad in the Cody Enterprise.

- **Who approached you about becoming a Master Gardener and what specifically interested or intrigued you about the concept of Master Gardening?**

Getting involved and giving some of my time to the community. It is also rewarding to share what you love. Selfishly, I wanted to learn more about gardening in this area of the country.

- **What is the best and worst gardening advice you have ever received?**

**The Best:** Be true to yourself, if you like it grow it. If you realize later that you don't like it, you can always change it.

**The Worst:** You're crazy to start gardening/landscaping out where you live. The climate is too dry, the soil too alkaline, the wind too severe, and there are too many rocks, and if anything grows the deer and rabbit will only eat it. NOT TRUE, if you persevere you can grow most anything that grows in zone 4. Just look at all the beautiful gardens in the area.

- **What is your funniest or fondest gardening memory and the biggest gardening "bloop" you have ever made?**

**Funniest/fondest memory:** A blue heron landed in the woodland pond that built in CT. It validated my attempt to create a naturalistic environment.

**Gardening blooper:** The same heron kept returning to eat many of the fish and frogs in and around the pond.

## GETTING TO KNOW YOU... PROFILE OF DAN WASP 'CONTINUED'

- **What is your least favorite plant (s) and why?**

*Tree:* Aspen and birch; even though I like their look, they are not very hardy in this area

*Flower:* Annuals; I don't like starting all over again in the spring

*Vegetable:* I love and eat them all, especially tomatoes

- **What gardening publication (s) or garden resource (s) do you find most beneficial?**

Fine Gardening published by Tauton Press and more recently Zone 4

- **What is the one gardening tool you couldn't live without?**

My hands! I love getting my hands dirty.

- **What was your greatest gardening extravagance and how did you justify it?**

A 1951 N Ford tractor. It is indispensable when I need to relocate all the rocks on my property.

- **What is the oldest and coolest implement in your gardening "tool box"?**

*Oldest:* My great grand-fathers hand spade

*Coolest:* When I keep them in shape they are all cool



WWW.CLIPARTSTOCK.NET

**"IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO BE WHAT YOU MIGHT  
HAVE BEEN."**

*~George Eliot~*

**FROM MEETEETSE COUNTRY... MESSAGE FROM THE GARDEN FAIRY***Asparagus*

**A**sparagus is a perennial plant that is native to the eastern Mediterranean and Asia Minor areas. The name "asparagus" comes from the Greek language meaning "sprout" or "shoot" and it is a member of the lily family as are onions, garlic, leeks, turnips and gladioli. The ancient Greeks loved wild asparagus but it was the Romans who first cultivated it. They were popular with the Romans who had written instructions on how to grow asparagus. So prized were these perennial shoots by the Romans that not only did they enjoy eating them in season but they were also the first to preserve it by freezing as early as the 1<sup>st</sup> Century AD when fast chariots would take the fresh asparagus from the Tiber River area to the Alps where it kept for six months until the Feat of Epicurus.

**T**he Romans are responsible for having introduced asparagus to England, where it gradually gained favor with the nobles and by the early 16<sup>th</sup> Century, it was widely served in many of the Royal courts of Europe. From there the early colonists brought it to America.

**A**rchaeologists have found traces of wild varieties in Africa and it is also thought to have been cultivated in ancient Egypt as evidenced by ancient Egyptian writings.

**P**erhaps it may surprise you that there are a few hundred varieties of asparagus but only a small number is edible. Although it's available all year round, asparagus usually is most found and best in Spring and is harvested when it is about 6 to 8 inches tall.

**A**sparagus is expensive compared to other more common vegetables simply because it is harvested by hand.

**T**he nutritional benefits of asparagus is an alkaline food which is rich in protein but low in calories and carbohydrates. It is an excellent source of potassium, folic acid, vitamins A, C, and K, and traces of vitamin B complex. A good source of dietary fiber, asparagus is also rich in niacin, phosphorus and very low sodium. Certainly most impressive is that it is one of those few vegetables that actually has the calcium and magnesium in the ideal ratio of 2:1.

**A**sparagus has an abundance of an amino acid called asparagines, that helps to cleanse the body of waste material. As a result, some people pass out smelly urine after eating asparagus. Don't worry if this happens to you. Just be glad that your kidney is functioning as it should.

**W**hen buying, choose asparagus with firm brittle spears and well colored tight tips. Try to choose stems which are the same size so they cook evenly. Asparagus is quite fragile. Store in the refrigerator for up to one week preferably in a perforated plastic bag.

**F**reezing is done by blanching whole spears of asparagus in boiling water for 2 minutes then open freeze on a tray. Once frozen, pack into freezer bags where they will keep for about five months.

## FROM MEETEETSE COUNTRY... CONTINUED

In the cooking of asparagus, it has to be cooked to get the best flavor and texture. To prepare them, if necessary, snap or cut off the bottom stalk to remove the tough fibrous part. Wash gently in cold running water. It can be cooked in many ways, but over-cooking should be avoided: they should be tender but not too droopy. Enjoy feasting on this tasty delicate vegetable!

### Spring Asparagus & White Bean Salad

**Makes:** 4 1-cup servings

#### Ingredients

- 3 C. asparagus, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  C. canned cannellini beans, rinsed and drained
- 5 thinly sliced radishes
- $\frac{1}{2}$  C. (2 oz) crumbled feta or goat cheese
- 1 medium shallot, peeled and minced
- 1 Tbsp. chopped fresh mint

#### Dressing

- 2 tsp fresh lemon juice
- 1 tsp grated lemon zest
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 2 tsp extra-virgin olive oil
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp salt
- $\frac{1}{8}$  tsp black pepper

#### Directions

Steam asparagus, covered 2 minutes or until crisp-tender.

Rinse asparagus with cold water and drain

Gently combine asparagus, beans, radishes, feta, shallot, and fresh mint in serving bowl.

Make dressing by combining lemon juice, lemon zest, mustard, olive oil, salt, and pepper, and whisk to combine.

Pour dressing over asparagus mixture and toss gently to coat.

**References:** [www.asparagus.com](http://www.asparagus.com) [www.recipes4us.co.uk/Asparagus.htm](http://www.recipes4us.co.uk/Asparagus.htm)  
[www.juicing-for-health.com/asparagus.html](http://www.juicing-for-health.com/asparagus.html)

## GOOD OL' FASHION RECIPES... JOYCE JOHNSTON

### *Makeover Rosemary Muffins*

**Makes:** One dozen (12) muffins

**Prep Time:** 20 to 30 minutes

**Total Time:** 50 to 60 minutes

#### **Ingredients**

1-1/2C all-purpose flour	1/2C fat free milk
1-1/2C whole wheat flour	1/4C canola oil
2tsp sugar	1Tbsp Dijon mustard
1tsp baking powder	1/2C crumbled goat cheese
3/4tsp baking soda	1/2C chopped Greek olives
1/2tsp salt	1Tbsp minced fresh rosemary or
2 eggs	1tsp dried rosemary, crushed
1-1/2C (12oz) reduced fat plain yogurt	

#### **Directions**

- In a large bowl, combine the first six ingredients.
- In another bowl, combine the eggs, yogurt, milk, oil and mustard. Stir into dry ingredients just until moistened.
- **Fold in the cheese, olives and rosemary.**
- Coat muffin tops with cooking spray; fill three-fourths full with batter.
- Bake at 375 degrees for 20-25 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in muffin comes out clean.
- Cool for 5 minutes before removing from pan to a wire rack. Serve warm.

**Delight Factor:** Um, um good!!

## BIRD HOUSE FACTS... EXCERPTED FROM BIRDS AND BLOOMS EXTRA



**6** The height at which you place birdhouses makes a big difference. A good average for most backyard songbirds is 6 feet, but check the guidelines at [www.birdsandblooms.com](http://www.birdsandblooms.com) to be sure.

**\$20** While many of the birdhouses on the market are pretty, either they aren't practical to put outside or they Don't meet size requirements. Save yourself \$20 or more by reading up on birdhouse guidelines first.



**1** The entrance of a birdhouse is very important, so do your research. The smallest recommended hole is 1 inch in diameter for house wrens. Hear the top of the scale is 4 inches for wood ducks and screech owls.

**0** You should have zero perches on your birdhouse! Even if they're decorative, they generally just aid predators.



**14** You can find 14 birdhouse plans in the Backyard Projects section of [birdsandblooms.com](http://birdsandblooms.com)

## STRAW BALE GARDENING... RITA LEWIS



A “new” old method for a raised garden bed is using an old bale of straw. Make sure the bale is at least 6-9 month old. This ensures that the bale has had time to “cook” the heat out of the bale and won’t cook the new plant.

Decide on a spot for the garden and put a galvanized bird netting wire over the spot, this keeps out the mice or moles and allows good drainage.

Place the bale, with the twine going lengthways, onto the wire. The bales must be upright so the water will drain straight down through the stalks.

Wet the bale down for a week and then let it cook in the sun for 3 weeks.

Insert soaker hose under the twines. Use a trowel to separate the stalks, toss in a handful of fertilizer, insert the plant and let the stalks go back in place. Straw bales gardening requires frequent watering.

Plants recommended for the bale gardens are: *Tomatoes, Squash and Zucchini, beans or peppers.*

~excerpted from *Straw Bale Gardens*- UNL



**WHAT AM I ?**

Name me \_\_\_\_\_?\_\_\_\_\_

**The First Master Gardener to answer correctly will get a**

**For correct answer... *Contact Julie Miner***

**Prize distribution... *Joyce Johnston***



## ARBOR DAY USA

The first Arbor Day took place on April 10, 1872 in Nebraska. It was the brainchild of Julius Sterling Morton (1832-1902), a Nebraska journalist and politician originally from Michigan. Throughout his long and productive career, Morton worked to improve agricultural techniques in his adopted state and throughout the United States when he served as President Grover Cleveland's Secretary of Agriculture. But his most important legacy is Arbor Day.



Morton (*photo, right*) felt that Nebraska's landscape and economy would benefit from the wide-scale planting of trees. He set an example himself planting orchards, shade trees and wind breaks on his own farm and he urged his neighbors to follow suit. Morton's real opportunity, though, arrived when he became a member of Nebraska's state board of agriculture. He proposed that a special day be set aside dedicated to tree planting and increasing awareness of the importance of trees. Nebraska's first Arbor Day was an amazing success. More than one million trees were planted.

A second Arbor Day took place in 1884 and the young state made it an annual legal holiday in 1885, using April 22nd to coincide with Morton's birthday. In the years following that first Arbor Day, Morton's idea spread beyond Nebraska with Kansas, Tennessee, Minnesota and Ohio all proclaiming their own Arbor Days. Today all 50 states celebrate Arbor Day although the dates may vary in keeping with the local climate. **[Wyoming State Arbor Day is officially the last Monday in April; the Cottonwood is Wyoming's State Arbor Day Tree]**

At the federal level, in 1970, President Richard Nixon proclaimed the last Friday in April as National Arbor Day. Arbor Day is also now celebrated in other countries including Australia. Variations are celebrated as 'Greening Week' of Japan, 'The New Year's Days of Trees' in Israel, 'The Tree-loving Week' of Korea, 'The Reforestation Week' of Yugoslavia, 'The Students Afforestation Day' of Iceland and 'The National Festival of Tree Planting' in India. Julius Sterling Morton would be proud. Sometimes one good idea can make a real difference.

For the homeowner, Arbor Day is an excellent opportunity to take stock of the trees on your property and plan for the future. Inspect your trees. Note any broken branches or evidence of disease or insect infestation. Think about how planting new trees might improve the look of your property or provide wind or heat protection. Take a trip to your local nursery to see what's available and to get new ideas. Walk around your neighborhood. Are there any public areas where tree planting or tree maintenance might make a real difference to your community? Talk with your neighbors. Find out what their opinions are. And, oh yes, plant a tree.

**treehelp.com.....Arbor Day USA**

## 2011 PARK COUNTY ARBOR DAY ACTIVITIES



### CODY

#### Schedule of Community Activities

**April 30..... 9 a.m. to 12 noon @ Cody Auditorium on Beck Avenue. Mayor Proclamation and Public Tree distribution.**

**MG Coordinators:** Rita Lewis and Jo Anne Arzillo

#### Tri-folds

- *Tree/shrub planting tips*
- *Companion planting of vegetables & Square Foot Gardening*
- *House Plants*

#### Demonstrations

- *Ant Farm*
- *Straw Bale Gardening*

**Handouts @ MG Table**

### POWELL

#### Schedule of Community Activities

**April 14 ..... 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. School Day for 5<sup>th</sup> Graders (Parkside, Southside and Westside schools)**

**April 15 ..... 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Mayor Proclamation and Public Tree distribution @ The Commons**

**Month of May..... School Tree Plantings [Southside Grade School and High School Senior Legacy Trees]**

**MG Coordinators:** Bob Prchal and Nancy Ryan

#### Tri-folds

- *Pruning techniques*
- *Tree/shrub planting tips*

**Handouts @ MG Table**

## DID YOU KNOW... EXCERPTED FROM 'FACTS ABOUT MARCH'

- The word 'March' comes from the Roman 'Martius'.
- This was originally the first month of the Roman calendar and was named after Mars, the god of war. March was the beginning of our calendar year. We changed to the 'New Style' or 'Gregorian calendar in 1752, and it is only since then when the year began on 1st January.
- The Anglo-Saxons called the month Hlyd monath which means Stormy month, or Hraed monath which means Rugged month.
- All through Lent the traditional games played are marbles and skipping.
- The games were stopped on the stroke of twelve noon on Good Friday, which in some places was called Marble Day or Long Rope Day. The game of marbles has been played for hundreds of years and some historians say that it might have been started by rolling eggs. In the past, round stones, hazelnuts, round balls of baked clay and even cherry stones have been used."

~~[Facts About March](#)

## WYOMING MASTER GARDENER ASSOCIATION BY BOB PRCHAL

### Remember..... 2012 State Conference will be in Gillette



Campbell County will host the 2012 State MG Conference. **Tentative date is April 27-28-29, 2012.** As of this newsletter date the Campbell County Master Gardeners are frantically working on a theme and considering potential speakers.

Lori Bates, Horticultural Program Coordinator for Campbell County will serve as Conference facilitator and contact.

## 2011 PCMG OFFICERS & EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President...*Terry Marcotte*



Past President...*Bob Prchal*

Vice President...*Dan Wasp*

Secretary...*Karen Anderson*

Treasurer...*Mickey Waddell*



## COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Cody Conservation District...*Donna Haman*

Cody Garden Tour...*Darlene Manning*

Greenhouse...*Bob Prchal*

Historian...*JoAnne Arzillo*

Library Programs...*Cheryl Wright*

Member Volunteer Hours...*Donna Haman*

Newsletter...*Bob Prchal*

Park County Fair...*Bob Prchal*

Scholarships...*Nancy Ryan/Kelli Maxwell-Benson*

Phone Tree...*JoAnne Arzillo*

Change of Address/Phone/Email...*Julie Miner*



### The Sage Gardener

*'Newsletter of the Park County Master Gardeners'*

Newsletter content should be submitted by the 15th of each month to Bob Prchal

[rjprchal@tritnet.net](mailto:rjprchal@tritnet.net)

**REMEMBER..... Keep it pithy!**

UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING, Cooperative Extension Service, Park County Offices

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