

February 2020
Muscatine County



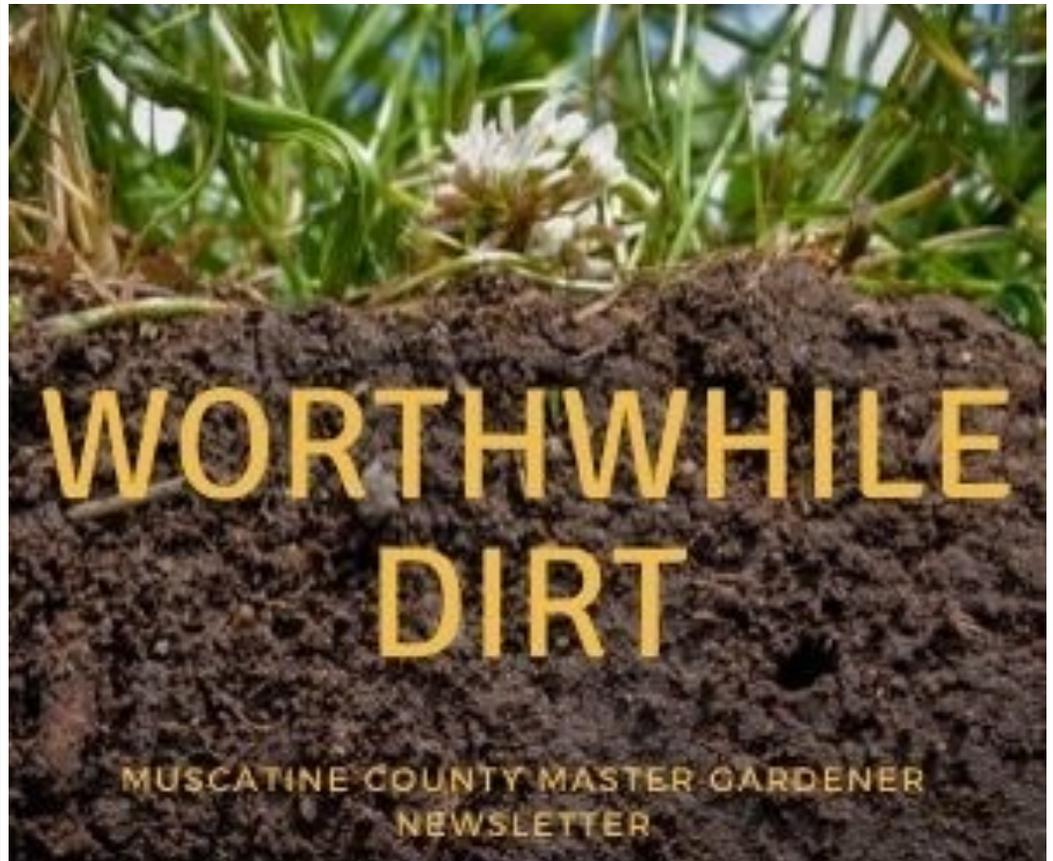
WORTHWHILE DIRT



Applications for the Search for Excellence award will be due on March 15, 2020.

Search for Excellence (SFE) is the recognition program of the Iowa Master Gardener program. SFE has seven categories:

- Youth/School Gardens
- Demonstration/Research Garden (applied scientific methodology)
- Workshop or Presentation
- Special Needs Audience (i.e. seniors, low-income families, people with disabilities, minority groups, incarcerated individuals, etc...)
- Mass Communications (i.e. newsletters, television, radio, social media, website, publications)



Master Gardener Winter Webcast Series



Iowa Weather

February 4, 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

With a changing climate, Iowa will be warmer and wetter. State Climatologist Dr. Justin Glisan from the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship will share what people can do to adapt to changing growing conditions.



Bring Kids in the Garden

February 18, 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

State Master Gardener Coordinator Susan DeBlicek wants adults to help get youth outdoors. She'll share ideas for Master Gardener volunteer project sites and landscape design tips.



Iowa's Botanists

March 3, 6:30 - 7:30 p.m.

Love native plants? Deborah Lewis is the curator of the Ada Hayden Herbarium. She'll present on early Iowa botanists, introduce the herbarium, and share her favorite native plants.



All webcasts will be held at the Muscatine County Extension and Outreach Office and are free and open to the public. Questions? Call 563-263-5701

www.extension.iastate.edu/mastergardener

Muscatine County

1601 Plaza Place, Muscatine, IA 52761

www.extension.iastate.edu/Muscatine

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Linn County Master Gardeners Winter Gardening Fair



Saturday, February 15, 2020

New Location

8 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. at **Kirkwood Regional Center**

1770 Boyson Road, Hiawatha, IA

\$49 for your choice of five classes and a baked potato buffet lunch

\$25 for student registration (high school or college)

To register, go to <http://bit.ly/gardening2020>

Looking for more events to attend? Please go check this website out for more Master

Gardener Events [https://
www.extension.iastate.edu/mastergardener/](https://www.extension.iastate.edu/mastergardener/)



February 21 – Pollinators: Growing Rural and Urban Habit 10am – 2pm @ Muscatine ISU Extension and Outreach, 1601 Plaza Place, Muscatine, IA 52761

A mini conference on pollinators with specialists from around Iowa. Presenters will include Sarah Nizzi, Farm Bill Pollinator Conservation Planner with the Xerxes Society; Amy Bouska, Urban Conservationist with the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship and Kristina TeBockhorst, Agriculture Engineering Field Specialist with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. Free event, meal provided. Space limited to 40- please RSVP to Lydia Whitman Lydia.whitman@usda.gov or 563-886-6214 x3!

Landscape Pruning Workshop

The Dubuque Master Gardeners in partnership with the Westminster Presbyterian Church are hosting an educational, outdoor hands-on landscape pruning event. Participants will learn how different pruning concepts relate to different landscape plants. Participants are required to bring their own pruning tools, and leather gloves. The event will be held at the Westminster Presbyterian Church in Dubuque, 12:30 to 3:45 pm Saturday, February 29, 2020, with a cost of \$10 per participant. Event fees cover refreshments. A snow date of March 7 is planned. Pre- registration is required to receive event notifications and can be done by calling (563) 583-6496.



More information can be found by visiting
[https://www.extension.iastate.edu/dubuque/
content/landscape-pruning-workshop](https://www.extension.iastate.edu/dubuque/content/landscape-pruning-workshop)

For questions, contact Ray Kruse at rakruse@iastate.edu.

Save the Date!

ART OF GARDENING

March 21, 2020

Presented by:



Muscatine Community College's Continuing Education Department is again offering its popular Art of Gardening daylong seminar, to educate and inspire others to seek enjoyment and fulfillment through a variety of home gardening-related topics and activities. This year's seminar will be held: **Saturday, March 21, 2020** MCC Strahan Hall 152 Colorado Street Muscatine, IA **Cost: \$45** (includes lunch)

Register online at <https://www.eicc.edu/future-students/events/art-of-gardening.aspx>

Registration is from 7:30 - 8:15 a.m. with coffee provided. The Welcome and Announcements are from 8:30 - 8:45 a.m. followed by the breakout sessions. Breakout sessions are scheduled for the day as well as vendor exhibits, and the Business Professional of America Bake Sale (MCC Student Organization). For more information contact [Cynthia Kress](#) in Muscatine Community College's Continuing Education Department, 563-288-6161 or toll free 1-888-351-4669.

Director's Input

By Krista Regennitter

**Muscatine County Extension Director, Iowa State University Extension
and Outreach**

Telephone 563-263-5701



Hello Master Gardeners!

It was wonderful to celebrate with you all at the annual meeting on January 12. Congratulations on contributing **over 2,500 hours of volunteer service** to Muscatine County! I am so proud of all the work you do to make our community a better place to live and work. Thank you!

If you are looking to kick your year off with some hours, we have plenty of education opportunities coming up! We have **one-hour webinars** scheduled on February 4, February 18 and March 3. All webinars are from 6:30-7:30 at the Extension Office. Descriptions are listed in the newsletter. I am still looking for a host for the February 18 session - remember, hosts get to count the time as both volunteer and education! Let me know if you are interested by emailing me at KristaR@iastate.edu. Those webinars get you three hours - then cap it off with **Art of Gardening** on March 21 and then you have 8 of 10 hours of your education hour requirement done! Another opportunity is the **Pollinator Workshop** on February 21, 10-2. This is a great

For those interested in land transitions, we are co-hosting an event with Women, Land and Legacy (Cedar, Muscatine, Scott County chapter) on March 12, 2020. We will be viewing the production **Map of My Kingdom** - a play commissioned by Practical Farmers of Iowa and written by Iowa's Poet Laureate Mary Swander, that tackles the critical issue of land transition. The event will begin at 6:30 pm at the Muscatine County Extension Office. For information or to RSVP please contact Lydia Whitman, 563-886-6214

We have a vacancy on the Muscatine County Extension Council. If anyone is interested in serving please contact me. I am happy to share information or answer questions. Names will be submitted to the council for consideration. This would be an appointed position through the end of 2020.

Looking forward to working with you in 2020!

Krista

News from the Chair

By Mary Danner, Master Gardener

This time of year, with every cold snap or snowfall, I say to myself, “its one day closer to Spring”. Yes, spring is not far off and it is a perfect time to start collecting those Continuing Education hours. You will see in this Newsletter many opportunities for getting those hours in at one of the upcoming garden fairs or webcasts. I highly recommend getting these hours in early in the year before the ground thaws and we start the fun all over again. The first ISU Webcast sponsored and paid for by our Muscatine MG funds is this coming Tuesday, Feb 4th at 6:30 pm. Weather always sounds interesting to me; I hope to get to that one-and it’s Free! There are many other classes or seminars this time of year, especially our Art of Gardening on March 21st at MCC. Don’t miss this one, lots of great classes and programs; might even see yours truly stammering through a presentation on my visit to France.

I heard a lot of positive comments on our annual meeting that was held on a Sunday afternoon in January. The crowd was great, wonderful food, and lots of door prizes, I think everyone got two. I do want to welcome the newly elected board members, Carolyn Lemaster, Mary Wildermuth, re-elected Ron Jensen, and the intern representative Angela Weber. You folks will do a fantastic job. We have our first Board Meeting of 2020 on Tue, Feb 11th at 6:30 pm at the Extension Office. At this time a new Chair will be elected and I will ‘pass the gavel’ of sorts.

Again I want to thank you for letting me serve as your Chair this past year, it was very enjoyable and I appreciate each and every one of you for all the hours you put into your projects, attending the meetings and workshops, and especially to Krista for her guidance this year. I couldn’t have done it without her.

Thanks again and see you at AOG!

Mary Danner



Upcoming Meeting & Event Highlights Muscatine County Master Gardens

Coordinated by TBD

— Stay tuned for the 2020 Program —

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

Extension and Outreach

Natural Resources News

Learn about Iowa's invasive species with new extension resources

We are excited to announce that we recently added a new suite of resources about invasive species to our [Natural Resource Stewardship](#) website. The new [Invasive Species in Iowa](#) page introduces the topic by explaining what an invasive species is and why species become invasive. The page provides links to articles on 8 common invasive plants in Iowa: buckthorn, burning bush, garlic mustard, honeysuckle, Japanese barberry, multiflora rose, Oriental bittersweet, and reed canary grass. The articles explain why each species is problematic and include photos of each plant as well as descriptions of identifying characteristics. They also incorporate information on preventing and controlling infestations and provide a link to our [Chemical Control of Unwanted Vegetation](#) article that gives guidance on appropriate chemicals and application methods to use for various plants.

We also now have an [invasive species YouTube playlist](#) showcasing a series of short social media style videos that feature photos set to music and briefly summarize impacts, identification, and control methods. This playlist will have videos for each of the 8 common invasive plants included on our website and a general introductory video on the topic. We plan to develop these resources further and will eventually add information for additional problematic species beyond plants so check back for updates!

Trivia question

Soybean farmers and foresters share a disdain for this exotic, invasive species that invades Iowa woodlands and is the overwinter host for a major soybean pest.

Trivia answer

Soybean aphid. Learn more about the other problems buckthorn creates in Iowa's woodlands at <https://naturalresources.extension.iastate.edu/encyclopedia/buckthorn-invasive-species-profile> and learn more about soybean aphid at <https://crops.extension.iastate.edu/encyclopedia/soybean-aphid>

January 12th Annual Meeting Minutes Muscatine Master Gardeners Association

By Rachel Horner Brackett, Master Gardener



-The Plant Sale is scheduled for May 9.

-The ISU winter webinars are scheduled for Tuesday February 4th, February 18th, and March 3rd. All will be at 6:30 PM. (see details higher in newsletter)

- * We voted on the nominating committee's suggestions for the 2020 Master Gardener Board. Which were:
 1. Ron Jensen (re-election)
 2. Carolyn Lemaster
 3. Mary Wildermuth
 4. Angela Weber (Intern)
- * Erin Parks motioned to approve the committee's recommendations and elect the slate of officers, and Lynn Pruitt seconded the motion. All attending master gardeners voted "aye" on the motion.

Best,

Rachel Horner Brackett

Muscatine County Master Gardener 2019 hours:
TOTAL Number of Volunteer hours for 2019:
2,580.95

Awards and Recognitions

From the January 12th Annual Meeting

Interns completing 40 hours
Karen Broden

New interns for 2019

Angela Weber

Lisa Freiling

Brandy Olson

Becky Schmertman

Mike McGrory

Erin Parks

Teri Dibbern



100 Hour Club –
Pam Viner (15), Mary Wildermuth (15)

250 Hour Club –
Terri Hanson (17), Jane Hodge (12)

500 Hour Club –
Carolyn Lemaster (00)



3000 Hour Club –
Bill Koellner (00)

10 + Year Service Award –
Karlyn Logal (09)

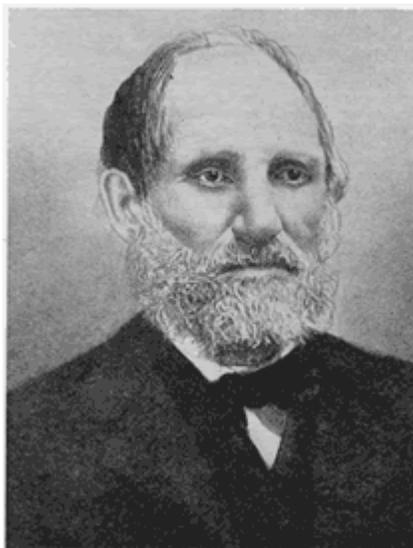
Outstanding Master Gardener – 400 hours or more volunteer time within the year 2019 - Bill Koellner (00)



Early Iowa Horticulturist -- Suel Foster **(Aug 26, 1811-Jan 21, 1886)**

Compiled by Lynn Pruitt, Master Gardener

Suel Foster traveled west from his New Hampshire birthplace to Rock Island, Illinois in 1836. The present-day city of Muscatine became his new home as he and his brother, along with four others, purchased the 160 acres comprising the town of Bloomington (name changed in 1849 to Muscatine, which came from the Musquetine tribe of Native Americans who once owned Muscatine Island, and the name is said to signify "little prairie").

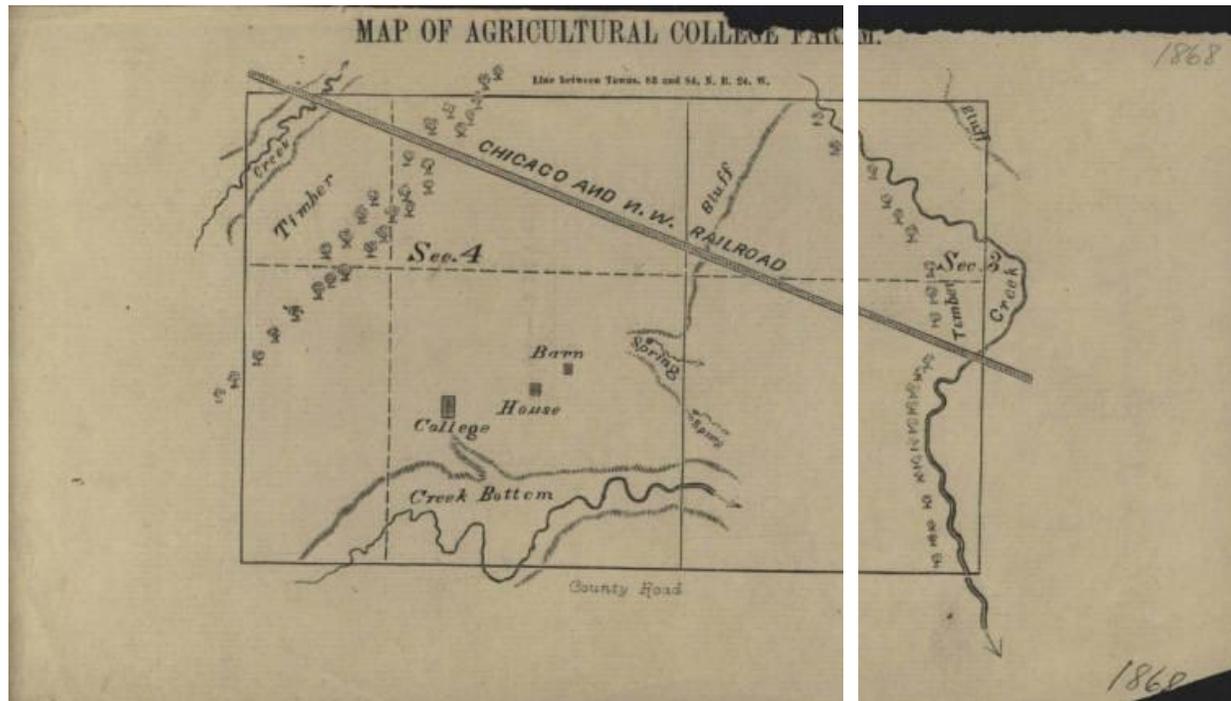


After spending an interim two years in California (1849-51), Foster returned to Muscatine where he planted a nursery and used it for his own horticulture research as well as produce. He reportedly drew aesthetic and even religious inspiration from his Fountain Hill Nursery (over 100 acres) which he maintained at Muscatine for 35 years.

Foster was a very active promoter of pioneer society as it developed on the Iowa frontier. He served in church, grange, agricultural society, farmer alliance, and other related frontier organizations. From the mid-1850s, Foster became the primary proponent for establishing a state agricultural college. Following his encouragement, the Iowa Legislature in 1858 passed the Organic Act of the Iowa State College of Agricultural College and Model Farm (later named Iowa State University). Foster became the first president of the Board of Trustees and served in that position until 1866. There was considerable opposition to the new college (some thought it competed with the State University of Iowa) but it finally opened its doors to students in 1869. Throughout the remainder of his life, Foster found himself lobbying the Iowa Legislature to provide adequate funding for laboratories and research facilities for the new college.

Early Iowa Horticulturist -- Suel Foster (Aug 26, 1811-Jan 21, 1886) - continued...

Compiled by Lynn Pruitt, Master Gardener



Applied horticulture research at the Agricultural College started with an experimental orchard with 400 fruit trees, 75 grape vines, one-half acre of potatoes, three quarters acre of various root crops and one-half acre of beans. The orchard and surrounding grounds also included various ornamental trees, shrubs and flowers.

Suel Foster spent much of his life writing articles for horticulture and agriculture technical journals. He helped start the Iowa State Horticultural Society in 1866 to boost research and provide a communication link with horticulture producers within the state. In 1873, Foster as president of the organization, addressed the State Horticultural Society annual meeting with, "We are engaged in a good cause, the planting of fruits and flowers, trees and hedges, to make comfortable and happy homes for those now living in our beautiful State, and for the coming millions who are hereafter to inhabit it. The work of horticulture, the cultivation of trees, fruits, and flowers, is the best and noblest work we can engage in. Man in his purity, was placed in the Garden of Eden, and directed by God himself to dress it and keep it." Foster remained totally engaged in the work of the Horticulture Society throughout his lifetime. He is quoted as saying, "Our society is a corporation of men, rather than money. Our object is public good, rather than private gain; we love the green tree, the flower, and the fruit, the vine, and the purple cluster, the virgin soil, and green grass for our carpet, and the sun and open air, in place of confinement in office and storeroom."

Early Iowa Horticulturist -- Suel Foster (Aug 26, 1811-Jan 21, 1886) Continued...

Compiled by Lynn Pruitt, Master Gardener

Although Suel Foster was interested in all aspects of horticulture, his primary interest was trees – trees for beauty and for their fruits. He particularly loved the catalpa tree and the Wealthy apple tree. He believed in, practiced, and taught others the ideals of conservation of natural resources and maintaining the natural beauty of the state.

Foster also believed in the essential interaction of agriculture with all aspects of the human existence including “markets, commerce, and internal improvements; political affairs, civil and religious; wars at home and abroad; mechanics and all the sciences.” This was his motivation for the establishment of the State Agricultural College. Suel Foster concluded, “Let our sons and daughters be educated for that which brings to them the highest standard of human perfection, Wisdom and Knowledge and Industry”.

BALD EAGLE WATCH

January 25, 2020 at Pearl City Station

Submitted by Lynn Pruitt, Master Gardener



Eagles were soaring over the adjacent Mississippi River while inside Pearl City Station many nature activities were being enjoyed by locals of all ages and visitors from out of the region. Muscatine County Master Gardeners and the Muscatine Arboretum hosted an activity booth providing children the opportunity to make eagle hand-puppets. Literature was distributed about the various programs available through Master Gardeners and visitors were encouraged to participate.

Educational programs were provided including demonstrations of various live raptors. Instructive information included the value of these birds to the local environment, their habitats, food sources, etc. Additional exhibits were hosted by Muscatine County Conservation Commission, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, The Nature Conservancy, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.



Prepare for Spring – Plant seeds to make seedlings for Spring planting

By Gretchen Nollman, Master Gardener,
and William Koellner, Lifetime Master Gardener



When planning and planting a vegetable garden, you can either plant seeds or purchase seedlings from your local garden center. While seeds are inexpensive when compared to the cost of vegetable seedlings, there are other factors to consider in making your final decision. Growing vegetables from seeds may not be practical for long-season plants with short growing seasons. That's why, when it comes to long-season plants such as tomatoes and peppers, and eggplant most gardeners will choose to either purchase seedlings/established potted plants or start their seeds indoors weeks before planting time.

How to Choose Between Seeds and Seedlings

The choice that you need to make between seeds and transplanting seedlings comes down to three basic questions:

1. Is the vegetable easy to germinate from seed?
2. Is the growing season long enough for the vegetable to mature if planted from seed?
3. Does the vegetable transplant well?

Answers to these three questions will determine how you plant your vegeta-

ble garden. To some degree, your answers will depend on the climate each year, and recently it's been variable. In a northern climate where the growing season is only five months long, a gardener may run out of time by planting seeds or very small seedlings. Last year's growing season is a good example in that gardeners were pushed to get a good garden in by nearly June 1.

Each seed packet itself provides a wealth of information to help you make your choice:

- **Time to Maturity.** This will tell you how long after the seed sprouts that the plant reaches maturity. If the packet indicates maturity is reached at 75 days, you won't get produce until after that time.
- **Sow Time.** The seed packet will tell you when the seeds should be planted relative to the last frost date in your area. It may even indicate that the seeds must be started indoors, as much as eight weeks before the last frost. These are vegetables you will want to plant as seedlings unless you are up to the challenge of starting them indoors.



Prepare for Spring – Plant seeds to make seedlings for Spring planting

By Gretchen Nollman, Master Gardener,
and William Koellner, Lifetime Master Gardener



Vegetables That Are Usually Direct Seeded in the Garden

Root crops and vegetables with long taproots, such as carrots, generally don't transplant well and need to be direct seeded. Some quick growing crops, like peas and summer squash, don't benefit from being started indoors because plants direct seeded in the garden will quickly catch up to transplants. Here are some common vegetables that are normally direct seeded:

- Beans
- Beets
- Carrots
- Corn
- Cucumbers
- Garlic
- Lettuce
- Muskmelons
- Peas
- Pumpkins
- Radishes
- Salsify
- Squash

Vegetables That Are Often Transplanted as Seedlings

Although it is possible to grow just about any vegetable from seeds, more slow-growing vegetables are often planted as seedlings that have been started indoors. The following are usu-

ally more convenient to transplant into the garden as established seedlings: \

- Basil
- Broccoli
- Brussels sprouts
- Cabbage
- Chinese cabbage
- Cauliflower
- Chard
- Chives
- Collards greens
- Eggplant
- Kale
- Kohlrabi
- Leeks
- Mustard
- Parsley
- Peppers
- Tomatoes
- Zucchini

Vegetables That Are Started From Roots or Bulbs

Then there are a handful of vegetables that aren't usually planted from seeds or seedlings at all, but from root divisions or bulbs:

- Garlic and Shallots: Planted from cloves
- Horseradish: Planted from root cuttings
- Onions: Planted from sets
- Potatoes: Planted from seed potatoes/divisions
- Rhubarb: Planted from root crowns
- Sweet Potatoes: Planted from slips



Prepare for Spring – Plant seeds to make seedlings for Spring planting

By Gretchen Nollman, Master Gardener,
and William Koellner, Lifetime Master Gardener



If you are going to grow seeds indoors, here are requirements and basic elements as growing plants indoors: light, seeds, soil, water, and food.

Lighting for Seed Starting

The hardest element to provide indoors is light. It is possible to start seeds on a windowsill or in a room that receives a full day of bright light (at least eight hours), but that's hard to come by in winter. Most gardeners will need to supplement their seedling lighting with special plant or grow lights that simulate the full spectrum of the sun. Even then, the lights will need to be left on for 16–18 hours per day for your seedlings to grow as strong and healthy as they would in true sunlight. These lights are at least \$30 for a 2-foot section. Hang the lights from chains so that you can raise them as your seedlings grow. Keep the lights as close to the seedlings as possible without touching (2 to 3 inches).

Choosing Seeds

There are so many choices of seeds to select from, and it's tempting to want to try them all. Keep in mind that as your seedlings grow, they will need to be moved into larger pots that will take up even more space, so choose wisely.

Buy seeds of plants you're certain you can't find at local garden centers or plants that you want to grow in large quantities inexpensively.

Potting Soil

Gardeners are often cautioned to use good potting soil. Potting soil is a mix of peat, vermiculite, and other fluffy matter that has the wonderful properties of being both water retentive and well-draining because it doesn't pack down like garden soil. It's also free of diseases and insects that may be overwintering in your garden soil. Of course, it also doesn't have any nutrients, so you'll need to add those.

When to Start Seeds

The timing to start seeds indoors is depend on the last expected frost date. Check your seed packets to see how many weeks growth are required before setting outdoors. Count back that many weeks from your last expected frost date to get an approximate date for starting those seeds. It's only approximate because the of each season's weather/.



Prepare for Spring – Plant seeds to make seedlings for Spring planting

By Gretchen Nollman, Master Gardener,
and William Koellner, Lifetime Master Gardener



Too Much or Too Little Water

The amount of water you give your plants can make or break seedling growth. This is one of the most challenging parts of growing plants from seeds. Because seedlings are so delicate, there is very little room for error when it comes to watering. Keep your sterile, seed-starting medium damp but not wet. Cover your container with plastic until the seeds germinate. Water from the bottom. By letting the plants soak up water through the bottom holes in their pots, there is less chance of overwatering. Do this for 10 to 30 minutes, checking for moist soil every 10 minutes with a finger or knuckle at the top of the plant. Consider buying a self-watering, seed starting system to reduce losses.

Keeping It Too Cool

For seeds to germinate, the soil must be kept warm from 65 to 75 F. There are special, warming seedling mats that you can buy to put under your seeds. A 10 inch by 20 inch mat can cost about \$17. You can also use a small heater set on a timer placed next to your seedlings. You will only need to worry about this until the seeds sprout. After that, most can tolerate fluctuating temperatures. Whatever type of light you use, natural or artificial should produce enough heat, but is not a guarantee.

Taking Plants Outdoors Too Early

This can be the toughest part of growing indoors. There is no benefit in a tough-love approach to seedlings when they are young. They will either instantly die or become weak and then fail to thrive. When your seedlings are about ready to go outside, you need to prepare them for the transition. The process is simple, though it can be time-consuming. The process called hardening off exposes your plants to the elements gradually. Put your seedlings outside for more time every day over a period of 6 to 10 days, depending on the outside temperature, and the fragility of your seedlings. This gradually prepares them for the wind and sun.



Muscatine County Extension Office

1601 Plaza Place
Muscatine, IA 52761
563-263-5701 or 800-992-0894

Krista Regennitter
Muscatine County Extension Director
Master Gardener Liaison

... and justice for all

Iowa State University Extension programs are available to all without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, or disability.

Iowa State University and U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating.

Current Emails and Addresses
As a reminder – keep both the Extension Office current on any changes of e-mail addresses, phone numbers, or mailing addresses. These need to be current to keep you — our members — informed.



More Photos from the January Annual Master Gardener meeting.

Above pictured is Ron Jenson and Lynn Pruitt. To the right is Marry Danner.



2020 Muscatine County Master Gardener Board (to be voted on Feb 11th)

Board Members

- Kathy Haltmeyer (2020) Chair?
- Heather Haroun (2020) Vice Chair?
- Rachel Horner Brackett (2020)* Sec/Treas?
- Ron Jensen (2021)
- Carolyn Lemaster (2021)*
- Ed Moreno (2020)
- Maryrose Peterschmidt (2020)
- Mary Wildermuth (2021)*

- Angela Weber (Intern)

() Year term expires as of Dec. 31
* Going off Board Dec 31, 2020 or 2021 but eligible for re-election



Editorial Comments:

Il enjoyed putting this together and look forward to more! f I missed anything or you don't see something that should be in here, please let me know by emailing me at

nollmanag@gmail.com or calling me 319-541-1462. Thanks! Gretchen Nollman