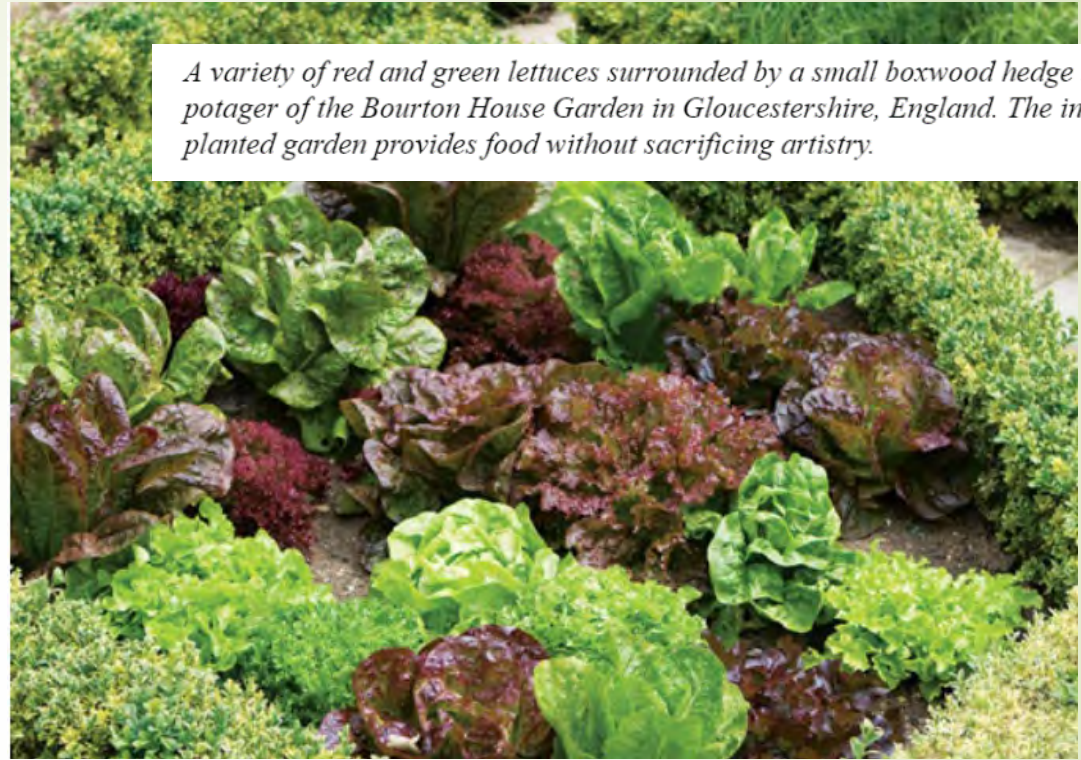


*A variety of red and green lettuces surrounded by a small boxwood hedge in the potager of the Bourton House Garden in Gloucestershire, England. The intensively planted garden provides food without sacrificing artistry.*



From: *The Kitchen Gardener's Handbook*,  
Jennifer R. Bartley, Timber Press © 2010

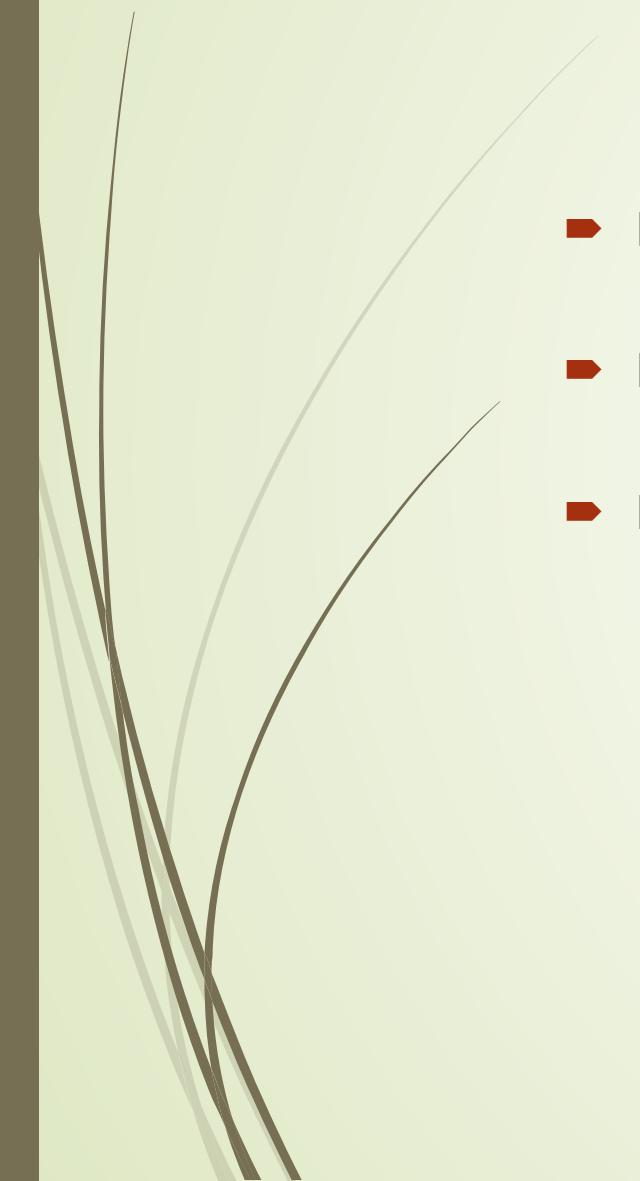
# Create a Potager Garden

Kitchen Gardens Can Be Beautiful

Sue Reinardy, UW-Extension Master Gardener Volunteer



# Program Contents

- ▶ Definitions, design elements, benefits, inspiration and resources
  - ▶ Do's and Don'ts
  - ▶ Dramatic plants: annuals, perennials, shrubs, and trees
- 



# Definition

- ▶ The potager is where the owner grows annual vegetables and flowers. Can be structured, an enclosed space that is the permanent frame for growing annual herbs, flowers, and vegetables. Can include permanent structures, shrubs & trees as well as perennials.
- ▶ “The old French ‘potager’ was a cottage garden, with fruit bushes and trees cultivated alongside vegetables and mingled with herbs and flowers.”  
from: *Creative Vegetable Gardening*, Joy Larkcom
- ▶ Other names: kitchen garden, front yard gardens, cottage garden, knot gardens, forest garden, edible landscape
- ▶ “American Potager is a garden with structures of raised beds and then let things go a bit wild in the beds.” From *Groundbreaking Food Gardens*, Niki Jabbour



# Resources



- ▶ *Vegetables Love Flowers*, Lisa Mason Ziegler © 2018 Cool Springs Press
  - ▶ *Creative Vegetable Gardening*, Joy Larkcome ©2008 Sterling Publishing Co.
  - ▶ *The Kitchen Gardener's Handbook*, Jennifer Bartlety © Timber Press
  - ▶ *A Garden Can be Anywhere*, Lauri Kranz © 2019 Abrams
  - ▶ *Groundbreaking Food Gardens*, Niki Jabbour © Storey Publishing
- 
- ▶ The Learning Store of the UW-Extension at:  
<https://learningstore.extension.wisc.edu/>



# This program's slides on GardenTrueNorth.com

Scroll down right  
side to "Programs"



Above: *Ficus benjaminia* that is now mine!

I have this perception that bonsai plants are finicky, intimidating plants that can only be taken care of by bonsai masters that have studied for decades under the watchful eye of a teacher. That can be true; there is much to learn about bonsai. But it is possible to keep it simple and natural. The *Ficus*, I'm calling him Ben, is the perfect plant to start with. Although I must admit I'm little skittish since having initial success with bringing a Rosemary plant into the house this fall and I have to report that it died last week.

Over the years I have had a limited number of houseplants. All I have left are the remnants of a multi-plant container that I bought for my desk 40 years ago. The Boston Fern, Snake Plant and Ivy are now full-grown and can withstand the lack of care that I have given them over the years. But still, I have had bonsai envy for a long time. They are so small and intriguing and can be very long-lived with specimens over hundreds of years old (mostly cared for by the aforementioned bonsai masters.)

## Programs

For information, please  
contact me or register for  
WITC classes listed.

### 2020 WITC Classes

\*Jan 31, 10-11:00 am WITC

How to Read Garden  
Catalogs - free program

\*April 17, 12-2:00 pm

WITC

Create a Potager Garden

\*May 1, 12-2:00 pm WITC

Woodland Gardens

Registration required

@WITC



# Design Elements



- ▶ 4-6 hours of sun
- ▶ Shelter from wind
- ▶ Soil fertility
- ▶ Pick a style, layout, pattern
- ▶ Protect from pests
- ▶ Paths, fences and supports
- ▶ Raised, in-ground, edges
- ▶ Focal points and features
- ▶ Containers
- ▶ Shrubs, trees, perennials
- ▶ Dramatic plants
  - ▶ Colorful
  - ▶ Structural
  - ▶ Texture
  - ▶ Climbers (adds vertical vs. horizontal)
- ▶ General Rule: the smaller the site, the simpler the design, i.e. a formal potager takes a lot of space.



# Evolution of a potager

See blog post:

<http://www.gardentruenorth.com/blog/evolution-of-a-garden>





2007: A lawn area is replaced with flowers and some vegetables





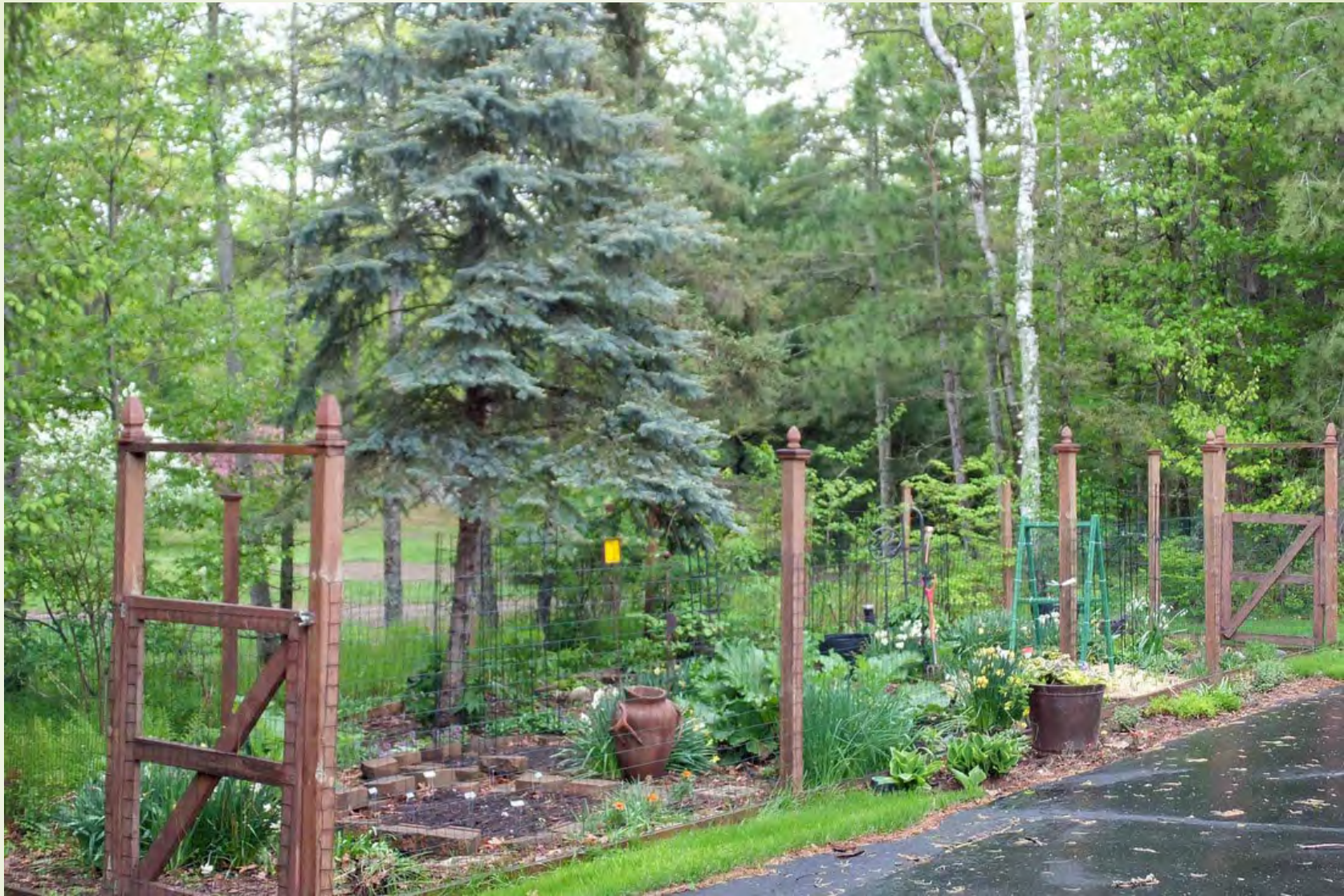
2008: The undefined area gets some raised beds and temporary fencing.





2011 – permanent fencing added





2013 – spruce tree was removed









2018: paths and replacement raised beds added





2018 – final result







# Do's & Don'ts

## Don'ts

- ▶ Use pesticides
- ▶ Put everything into rows
- ▶ Till
- ▶ Be impatient (give it time)
- ▶ Forget perennials but focus on annuals
- ▶ Plant a flower here and there – plant masses

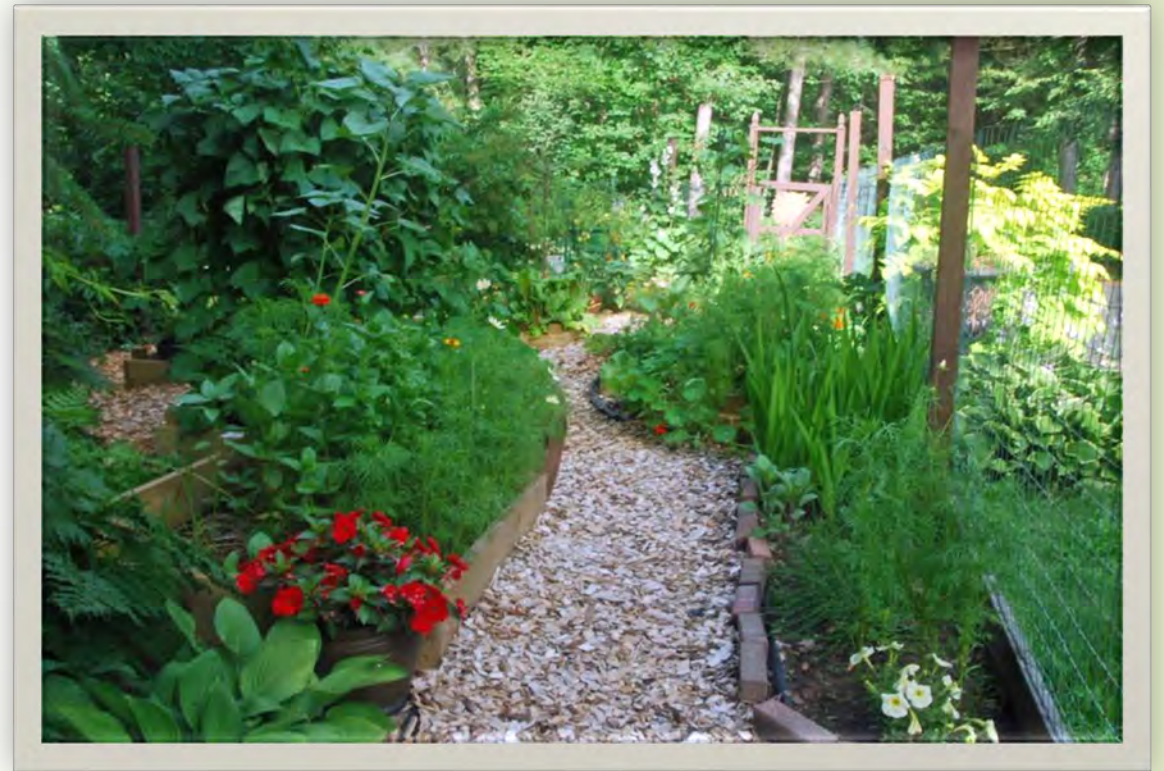
## Do's

- ▶ Start with good soil (get a soil test)
- ▶ Use compost (leaves, etc.)
- ▶ Fertilize
- ▶ Protect from pests
- ▶ Close to a water source
- ▶ Mulch paths for weed control
- ▶ Always have a few spare plants to replace casualties



# Garden Notes

- ▶ Put your garden in the sunniest spot on the property
- ▶ Create a garden your family can live in
- ▶ Keep away from trees, landscaping, and structures that may cause trouble for vegetables
- ▶ Raised beds: good for compromised soil, make gardening easy on the back, look good
- ▶ In the ground: least expensive, direct connection to soil flavors the food
- ▶ Container gardens: good for small spaces and on decks, roofs, and patios
- ▶ Consider the critters
- ▶ Plan food goals
- ▶ Take your cues from nature: How will this garden add to the beauty of the buildings, trees, and shrubs that already exist there?







More Inspiration





Minnesota Landscape Arboretum





Photo: *A Garden Can be Anywhere*





Photo: *A Garden Can be Anywhere*





Photo: ***A garden Can be Anywhere***





Photo: ***A garden Can be Anywhere***





Torrigiani Gardens, Florence, Italy



A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide, featuring a dark red arrow pointing right at the top, and several thin, dark, curved lines extending downwards from the arrow's tail.

# Mt. Vernon Kitchen Garden



# Planting

- Squares, circles, rows, scattered are all fine
- Nice to have a defined area to pick weeds out
- Add trellis or other supports when planting
- Aim for 40% flowers, 60% veggies
- Keep flowers together that bloom at the same time



Hillside in Florence, Italy





# Seeds vs. Transplants

- ▶ Transplants:  
Broccoli\*, brussels sprouts,  
cabbage\*, cauliflower, collards,  
eggplant, kale, okra, peppers,  
shallots, spinach, Swiss chard\*,  
tomatoes

- ▶ Seeds:  
Beets\*, carrots\*, corn, cucumbers,  
fennel, lettuce\*, melons, onions\*,  
peas, potatoes, pumpkins,  
radishes\*, rutabagas, squash,  
turnips, watermelons

- ▶ \* - indicates can be Winter Sown,  
interested in this technique? Go  
to: [wintersown.org](http://wintersown.org)



# Days to Maturity, Planting time



- Soil temperature
- Seed germination temperatures
- Zone 3b-4b
- Average last Spring Frost, May 24-30
- Average Fall killing frost, September 13-19
- Growing Season Days, about 110 days





# Insectary



- ▶ Certain plants contain properties that either invite beneficial insects or repel harmful insects
  - ▶ Use plants to cut down your use of insecticides and your workload
- ▶ Lemon Balm
  - ▶ White Alyssum
  - ▶ Fennel
  - ▶ Dill
  - ▶ Cosmos
  - ▶ Borage
  - ▶ Sunflower
  - ▶ Achillea
  - ▶ Lemon Verbena





**Teachable Moment**  
Insectariums are areas in a vegetable garden used to promote overall diversity in the garden. They contain herbs and flowers that attract beneficial insects to help control pest insects in the vegetable garden.

  
UNIVERSITY OF  
WISCONSIN-MADISON  
wimastergarden



# Plants that Attract Beneficial Insects

- Alyssum (not edible)
- Bachelor Button
- Borage
- Cosmos (not edible)
- Dill
- Echinacea
- Fennel
- Monarda/Bee Balm
- Rudbeckia (not edible)







# Crop Rotation – 4 year sample

1. Carrot & Goosefoot: Beets, Spinach, Swiss Chard, carrots, parsley, dill, parsnips
  2. Cabbage: Brussels sprouts, broccoli, cabbage, kale, cauliflower, rutabagas, turnips
  3. Squash & Others: Beans, lettuce, peas, onion, cucumber, melon, squash
  4. Tomato: eggplants, peppers, potato, tomato
- Different vegetable crops tend to take varying amounts of nutrients and attract pests, diseases – rotating the placement each year can avoid these problems
  - A minimum 3-yr rotation is recommended
  - Group according to family groups
  - Don't worry about perfection when following this practice

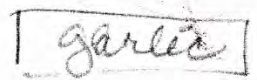
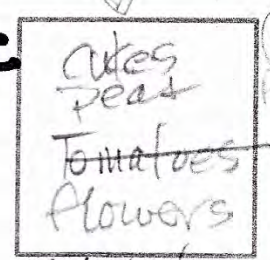
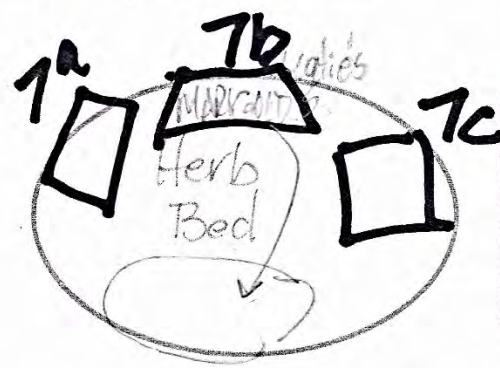
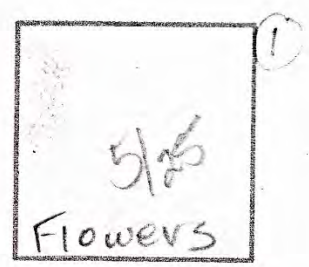
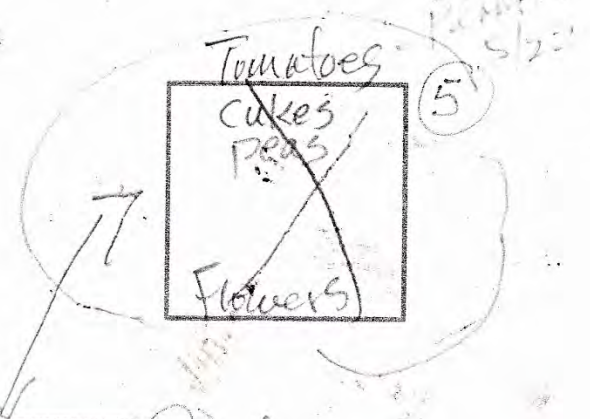
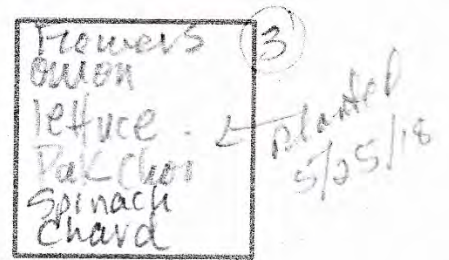
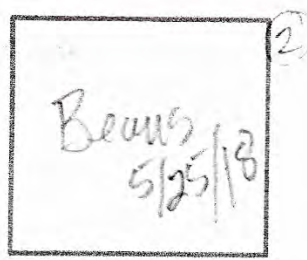
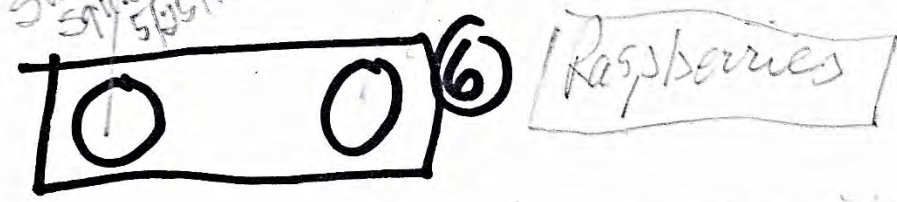


5/22/18 60°  
5/25/18 67°

Soil Temp  
Summer  
5/25/18

Refugia

2018



Dahlias  
5/25/18

Katie's  
MARGARITA 5/27/18

## 2018 Planting Map

(I also keep my order receipts so I know where the seeds were acquired.)





# Give It A Try?

From: *Vegetables to Flowers*

- ▶ Placing water in the garden will train birds and other creatures to drink from the vessel instead of pecking tomatoes & fruits
- ▶ Garden stakes & trellises– a place for birds to land while seeking insect pests
- ▶ Have something blooming continuous from spring through fall to encourage beneficial insects & pollinators
- ▶ Pollinator Friendly: Pansies, violas, nasturtiums, borage & calendulas
  - ▶ Enjoyed for bright flowers
  - ▶ Lure pollinators
  - ▶ Blooms are edible





Olbrich Gardens, Madison – herbs & vegetables





Private Garden: Hayward, WI





Private Garden: Hayward, WI (notice over septic field)



# Perennials to form Foundation

- Rhubarb
- Asparagus
- Raspberries
- Herbs: (not mint!), chives, oregano, Hyssop, borage, sage
- Flowers: Alliums, daffodils (later cover with hostas), flowering trees & shrubs (elderberries, chokeberry, blueberries, apples)





# Small Fruits

- 
- Blackberries
  - Currants
  - Gooseberries
  - Elderberry
  - Strawberry
  - Juneberry
  - Grapes
  - Lingonberries

UW Extension  
A2488

“Home Fruit  
Cultivars for  
Northern Wisconsin



# Espalier



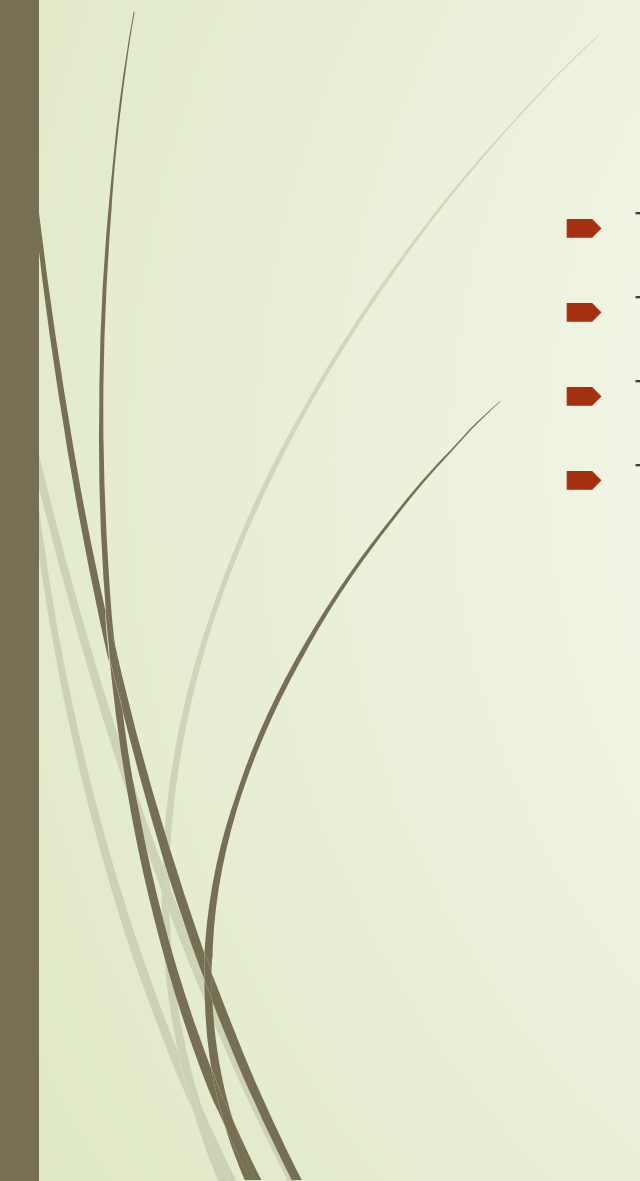
- Best used on plants that have flexible woody branches.
- Often used with apple trees
- Want to know more about this technique – go to this Master Gardener article:

<https://wimastergardener.org/article/espalier/>





# Add Containers

- ▶ To provide attractive elements to the garden
  - ▶ To contain aggressive plants like mints
  - ▶ To have some spare plants to move to perennial beds elsewhere
  - ▶ To provide succession plantings
- 





Minnesota Landscape Arboretum





Private Garden: Traverse, MI





Chanticleer Gardens, Wayne, PA



# How Deep should the pots be?

- ▶ 7-8" Herbs such as thyme, oregano, sage, mint
- ▶ 12" Vegetables and herbs such as: kale, Swiss chard, peas, cucumbers, lettuce, arugula, basil, radishes, spinach, chives, parsley, cilantro, rosemary
- ▶ 18" vegetables including: tomatoes, peppers, broccoli, cauliflower, beets, eggplant, onions, leeks.







# Plant for dramatic effect

## Backbone plants

- ▶ Cruciferae – cabbage family
- ▶ Allium
- ▶ Beet Family
- ▶ Self-seeding flowers: borage, calendula, evening primrose, pansies, nasturtiums
- ▶ Cut and come again: lettuces, pak choi, chard, kales, dills, spinach

## Climbers

- ▶ Beans
- ▶ Squashes
- ▶ Cucumbers
- ▶ Peas







# Cool Season Hardy Annuals

➤ Prefer cool to cold temperatures, some can even survive below-freezing temperatures:

- Pansies
- Sweet peas
- Snapdragons
- Spinach
- kale





# Warm-season Tender Annuals



- ▶ Prefer warm to hot temperatures, frost kills most of them
  - ▶ Zinnias
  - ▶ Sunflowers
  - ▶ Tomatoes
  - ▶ Basil
  - ▶ Peppers
- ▶ (It's the nighttime temperature that dictates, usually meaning that it stays above 50°)



# Cutting Garden in the Potager





# Springtime Bouquet

- ▶ Spring Bulbs (Daffodils, Tulips, Alliums, etc.)
- ▶ Spring flowering trees & shrubs (Lilac, Viburnum, Crabapple, Elderberry)
- ▶ Peonies, Columbine, Bleeding Hearts, Lupine, Globe Flower, Iris, Lady's Mantle, Dianthus
- ▶ Hosta
- ▶ Chives, Parsley





# Summer Bouquet



- Annuals: Cosmos, Snapdragons, Celosia, Gomphrena, Marigold, Zinnias, Sunflowers, Nasturtium, Gladiolas
- Shrubs: False Spirea (*Sorbaria sorbifolia* 'Sem'), Viburnum, Hydrangea, Ninebark, Elderberry, Dogwood, Weigela
- Delphinium, Phlox, Lilies, Yarrow, Rose, Sedum, Daises, Bee Balm, Astillbe, Cone Flower, Blanket Flower,
- Basil, Parsley, Dill, Mint



# Autumn Bouquet

- Dahlia, Aster, Zinnia, Sunflowers,
- Hydrangea, Black-eyed Susan, Sedum, Obedient Plant, Hosta
- Cabbages, Kale, Parsley
- Grapes, Rose Hips, Hops, Clematis
- Ornamental Grasses, Millet
- Seed Heads





# Winter Bouquets



- Evergreen branches
- Forced Bulbs
- Forced branches
- Dried & Preserved Flowers



# If you only have a shady spot

- ▶ Leafy vegetables can tolerate 3-4 hours of sunshine: kales, spinach, leaf lettuce, chard, beans, peas, Chinese cabbage
- ▶ Shade tolerant edible fruit: elderberry, black chokeberry, clove current, serviceberry
- ▶ Site next to a white wall to reflect light or light color stones for a path
- ▶ Trim trees to provide more light
- ▶ Make sure soil is well-amended to give as good conditions as possible





# High Return Plants



- Pole Beans
- Raspberries
- Indeterminate tomatoes
- Zucchini
- Swiss Chard
- Cut & Come Again lettuces
- Self-seeders: dill, borage, calendula, violas,



# Harvest Regularly & Often



- Beans, cucumbers, tomatoes will provide more if you harvest regularly
- Flowers
- Lettuces
- Remove plants that are done and compost them to keep it all attractive





Chanticleer Gardens, Wayne PA





Private Garden – Mineral Point, WI



# Thank You

Sue Reinardy

UW Extension Master Gardener Volunteer  
[sreinardy@centurytel.net](mailto:sreinardy@centurytel.net)

Blog: [GardenTrueNorth.com](http://GardenTrueNorth.com)

North Country Master Gardener Volunteers  
[www.northcountrymgv.org](http://www.northcountrymgv.org)



Private garden: Webster, WI