



GROWING GARDENERS

NEWSLETTER FOR SOUTH EASTERN ALBERTA



THE DIRT THIS MONTH

02 PLANT OF THE MONTH

Native species to
know and love

02 BUDDING GREEN THUMBS

Interview with young Ross
Glen School gardeners

03 GROWING MORE FOR LESS

Little money, many plants

04 WATER-WISE GARDENING TIPS

Part 1: Start with the Soil

05 MAY GARDEN EVENTS

+ Upcoming events for
06 plant-curious people

07 CFCA GARDEN CLUB

Growing Gardeners +
CFCA info

CFCA's Growing Gardeners Newsletter aims to support gardeners of all experience levels in Medicine Hat and area. To sign up for our mailing list, email CFCAGarden@gmail.com.

NATIVE PLANT OF THE MONTH

CANADA ANEMONE

Anemonastrum canadense

Canada anemone is a handsome low-growing native plant that produces white blossoms in the spring. Plant in a shady spot without competition where it will easily spread by rhizomes.

Type: Perennial

Family: Buttercup
(Ranunculaceae)

Height: 20 - 50cm

Flower: White

Bloom: May - July

Light: Shade, part-sun

Soil: Moist, well drained

Supports:   

Start from: Root cuttings or stratified seed

Benefits:

- Spreads easily due to aggressive rhizomes
- Attracts predatory insects to control pests
- Supports native bees

Note:

- Poisonous if ingested

Reference:
TWC Staff. (2022, November 18). *Plant Database: Anemone canadensis*. Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center.
https://www.wildflower.org/plants/result.php?id_plant=anca8

BUDDING GREEN THUMBS

We were delighted to interview 5th grade students Ezra Torrie (E) and Claire Bigelow (C), whom we met at the Ross Glen School Science Fair in March. Thank you for sharing your garden journey with us!

What was your science experiment about?

E: Which type of fertilizer will help a plant grow the tallest and fastest. I used all purpose fertilizer, rabbit pellets (manure) and liquid fertilizer.

C: Growing plants with different types of liquids. I used Coca-Cola, cold coffee, water, Miracle Grow Plant Food Sticks, and juice.

What motivated you to study how plants grow?

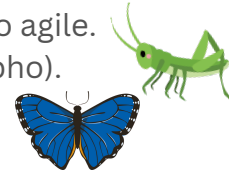
E: Usually, my family plants a garden every year.

C: Last year I did an experiment on different colors of lights and plants so I wanted to do another experiment with plants.

If you could be any insect, what would it be?

E: Grasshopper because they are so agile.

C: Butterfly (Monarch or Blue morpho).



When did you start gardening?

E: I started gardening when I was about 7 years old.

C: When I was 3, I was poking the holes and putting seeds in them.

Favorite thing to grow:



E: Peas C: Green beans



What advice do you have for other gardeners based on your science experiment?

E: Use fertilizer that doesn't have a lot of extra ingredients other than the fertilizer. The rabbit pellets (manure) work pretty well.

C: Maybe try growing your plants with coffee, but not hot coffee.

What do you think are the best qualities to have as a gardener?

E: Patience and the ability to be calm.

C: Interest in gardening, patience, dedication.



GROWING MORE FOR LESS

This year, many of us will be looking to the vegetable garden to save money on groceries. To avoid growing a \$64 dollar tomato, we wanted to share some ideas to help you grow more for less.



Reuse Potting Mix

New potting mix is best for starting seeds (previously used mix may contain fungi that cause damping-off disease). But don't throw out the old potting mix from last season! It can be reused for bumping up seedlings into larger pots, or for outdoor container-growing.



Cheap and Cheerful

Skip buying a heat mat. Those few warm-season plants that benefit from added heat will still germinate without it; they just take a few more days. Indoor seedlings need supplemental light. An expensive full-spectrum light is for growing plants to maturity indoors, which most of us are not doing. Try an affordable alternative like buying a grow bulb for an existing lamp, LED shop lights, or borrowing a light from a friend. Seeds do not need to be fertilized in the first few weeks of life. After that, only apply fertilizer if your potting mix does not contain any.



Start from Seed

Test your old seeds before throwing them away; they might surprise you! Place 10 seeds on a moistened paper towel inside a zip-top bag and see what sprouts in the next week or two. If only half sprout, just plant twice as many! If you do need a new supply of seeds, look out for local events like Plant Swaps and Seedy Saturday/Sunday to find seeds, plants, tools, garden books, and more. CFCA has partnered with the Medicine Hat Public Library for our Seed Library where gardeners can share seeds that they have saved or purchased with one another.



Plant In-Ground

Raised beds are trendy but less practical on the prairies where their improved drainage means applying more water. Buying the raised beds and the soil to fill them is also costly. Unless you need the accessibility of raised beds, consider growing an in-ground garden. We have some great native soils in Southern Alberta that usually only need some added organic matter (like compost) to grow a beautiful garden.



Sharing is Caring

Talk to friends and neighbors. Many gardeners have at least one perennial that is trying to take over and are happy to split it and give some away. Some delicious examples are rhubarb, strawberries, raspberries, walking onions, chives, lovage and (so much) mint.

WATER-WISE GARDEN TIPS

START WITH THE SOIL

BUILD HEALTHY SOILS AND MULCH WITH ORGANIC MATTER TO USE WATER MORE EFFICIENTLY, GROW BETTER PLANTS AND SPEND LESS TIME WEEDING!

MULCH

(5 - 15 cm)

BENEFITS:

- PREVENT EROSION
- LOCK IN MOISTURE
- SUPPRESS WEEDS
- REGULATE TEMPERATURE

BEST CHOICES:



Leaves
(shredded)



Paper/Cardboard
(shredded)



Arborist
Wood Chips



Straw
(shredded)



Dry Grass
(sparingly)



Pine Needles
(dry)

TOP DRESS

(5 cm)

AMENDMENTS

Improve biological + physical properties

COMPOST



SOURCE

Home-made, MH
landfill or garden
centres

BENEFITS

Moisture
Retention



Lighter
Soil



Supports
Soil Life



Provides
Nutrients



AGED MANURE



Garden centres or
local farms

CONDITIONERS

Improve mainly physical properties

COCO COIR



By-product at local
greenhouses

PEAT MOSS



Garden centres



Top the soil with organic matter every season then cover with mulch!

MAY PLANTING CALENDAR

sun	mon	tue	wed	thurs	fri	sat
Transplant: Broccoli Brussels sprouts Kale/Collards	Sow Outdoors: Beets + Carrots Kale Lettuce Peas		¹ Plant ID Walk CFCA Garden Club	²	³	⁴
⁵ Yoga @ Windmill Transplant: Cabbage Cauliflower Celery Lettuce Swiss chard	⁶ MHHA Meet Sow Outdoors: Beets + Carrots Lettuce Kale + Parsnip	⁷	⁸ Scientist for a Day CFCA Garden Club	⁹	¹⁰	¹¹
¹² Yoga @ Windmill Transplant: Cabbage Cauliflower Celery Onion Swiss chard	¹³ Sow Outdoors: Beets + Carrots Carrots Kale Parsnip Potato	¹⁴	¹⁵ Elm Street Plant Sale CFCA Garden Club	¹⁶	¹⁷	¹⁸ Farmers Market Starts Native Plant @ Windmill
¹⁹ Yoga @ Windmill Transplant: Onion Squash Tomatoes Squash	²⁰ Sow Outdoors: Beans Beets + Carrots Cucumber Squash	²¹	²²	²³	²⁴	²⁵ Inv. Species Walk MHHA Plant Sale
²⁶ Yoga @ Windmill Transplant: Eggplant Onion Peppers Tomatoes Squash	²⁷ Sow Outdoors: Beans Beets + Carrots Corn Cucumber Squash	²⁸	²⁹ CFCA Garden Club	³⁰	³¹	

PLANT ID WALK + SCIENTIST FOR A DAY

Interpretive Program @ Police Point Park

May 1 (Plant ID) + May 8 (Scientist for a Day). Check out these and other upcoming nature events at www.natureline.info.

MHHA MONTHLY MEETING

MH Horticultural Association

Mon, May 12, 7:30pm. 504 2 St SE. May General Meeting with guest speaker, Dylan Lafferty with Rivendel Tree Farms. Free to attend.

YOGA + MEDITATION IN THE GARDEN

Windmill Garden Centre

Every Sunday in May. 20\$/session. For more information, go to <https://windmill-gardencentre.com/events>

**SEE PAGE 6 FOR MORE
EVENT INFO!**

MAY EVENTS

BUDDING BOTANISTS

PLANT ID WALK



**WEDNESDAY
MAY 1
1:30 - 3:00 PM**

Police Point Park
Medicine Hat
FREE!



Is this a Plains Cottonwood?

Call the Nature Line to register for this free public program.

MH INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM
Managed by the Society of Grasslands Naturalists




ELM STREET SCHOOL GARDEN CLUB

PLANT SALE

WHEN: Wednesday, May 15th, 2024
2:45 pm - 4:30 pm

WHERE: Elm Street School
1001 Elm St SE, Medicine Hat, AB

WHAT: Vegetable, Herb + Flower Seedlings, Houseplants, and more propagated by the students!

WHY: All proceeds will be used to support the Elm Street School Garden Club.

FOR MORE INFO: MELYNDA.HARRISON@SD76.AB.CA




Saturday, May 25, 2024

10:00 am to 3:00 pm
(or sell-out: whichever occurs first)

in the backyard of the
Ewart Duggan House
(next to the Esplanade)



For more information, check out:

- * Facebook
- * X (formerly Twitter)

@hort_hat
* Our website:
medhathort.ca

Hat Creekside Stewardship Group


Neighbourhood Invasive Species Event



Residents of Harlow are invited to come meet their neighbours, learn about invasive species and how to control them Saturday, May 25, from 10am until noon.

GROWING GARDENERS EDUCATION PROGRAM

2024 will be our 3rd year offering Growing Gardeners Education Program, CFCA's free garden club. We are excited to continue to provide ecologically-responsible advice and hands-on learning to gardeners of all experience levels in Medicine Hat. We are grateful for our partnership with the Root Cellar Food and Wellness Hub and their lovely community access garden, which is one of the venues for Growing Gardeners Education Program. We also plan to explore some other garden sites in the city this season to highlight different types of growing conditions. Follow us on social media to get up-to-date information about Garden Club, workshops and other local events. To get this newsletter sent directly to your inbox every month during the growing season, or to receive a copy of the 2024 Garden Planner, email CFCAgarden@gmail.com.



Growing Gardeners
Education Program

**GROW YOUR OWN FOOD
PREVENT WEEDS + PESTS
SUPPORT BENEFICIAL INSECTS
USE WATER WISELY
AND MORE!**




May 1, 7pm - Root Cellar
Transplants + Hardening Off

May 15, 7pm - Food Forest
Moisture + Mulch

May 29, 7pm - TBD
What to Know About Weeds

Growing Gardeners Education Program (aka Garden Club) is back! Our free, hands-on garden club covers different topics relevant to our climate throughout the growing season. Registration is not required and children are welcome if accompanied by an adult guardian. Watch our social media pages to get updates about dates, topics and locations. We meet mostly outside meaning adverse weather may force us to cancel or move sessions around.

For more information, contact our Garden Program Coordinator, Genevieve (cfcagarden@gmail.com).

GARDEN PLANNER		2024 ZONE 3/4									
Vegetable	Method	Indoor Start Dates		Transplant Out Dates		Direct Sow Dates		Min. Soil Temp (Celsius)	Days to Maturity		
		Earliest	Latest	max	min	max	min		min	max	
Beans (bush)	DS	x	x	x	x	May 20	July 1	15	50	60	
Beans (pole)	DS	x	x	x	x	May 20	July 1	15	60	70	
Beans (drying)	DS	x	x	x	x	May 20	July 1	15	90	100	
Beets	DS	x	x	x	x	April 22	June 24	5	50	70	
Broccoli	Trans	March 11	March 25	April 29	May 6	x	x	5	60	100	
Brussels Sprouts	Trans	April 8	April 22	April 29	May 6	x	x	5	100	180	
Cabbage	Trans	March 11	March 25	April 22	April 22	x	x	5	70	100	
Carrot	DS	x	x	x	x	April 22	June 24	10	60	80	
Cauliflower	Trans	March 25	April 8	May 6	June 3	x	x	5	60	120	
Celery (stalks)	Trans	February 26	March 11	May 13	June 3	x	x	5	130	140	
Celery (root)	Trans	March 11	March 25	May 13	June 3	x	x	5	100	150	
Com	DS	x	x	x	x	May 27	June 24	15	70	105	
Cucumber (pick)	Trans+DS	April 22	April 29	May 27	June 3	May 27	June 17	15	55	65	
Cucumber (slice)	Trans+DS	April 22	April 29	May 27	June 3	May 27	June 17	15	55	65	
Eggplant	Trans	March 25	April 8	June 3	June 10	x	x	15	100	140	
Kale / Collards	Trans+DS	April 8	April 22	April 22	May 13	April 22	July 29	5	55	75	
Kohlrabi	Trans	April 8	April 22	April 29	May 13	x	x	5	55	70	
Leeks	Trans	March 11	March 25	April 22	June 3	x	x	5	120	150	
Lettuce (head)	Trans+DS	April 1	April 15	April 22	May 20	April 22	April 29	10	40	80	
Lettuce (leaf)	Trans+DS	April 1	April 15	April 22	May 20	April 22	April 29	10	40	80	
Melon	Trans	April 22	April 29	June 3	June 10	x	x	20	70	130	
Okra	Trans	April 15	April 29	June 10	May 20	x	x	15	50	65	
Onion (dry)	Trans	March 11	March 25	June 17	May 13	x	x	10	100	120	
Onion (green)	Trans+DS	April 8	May 6	June 3	May 6	July 1	10	40	60		
Parship	DS	x	x	x	x	May 6	June 3	10	110	130	
Peas	DS	x	x	x	x	April 22	May 27	5	55	85	
Peppers (hot)	Trans	March 11	March 25	June 3	June 17	x	x	15	60	100	
Peppers (sweet)	Trans	March 11	March 25	June 3	June 17	x	x	15	60	90	
Potato	DS	x	x	x	x	April 22	May 13	10	90	130	
Radish	DS	x	x	x	x	April 8	June 3	5	45	70	
Shallot	Trans	March 11	March 25	April 22	May 13	x	x	10	90	120	
Spinach	DS	x	x	x	x	April 8	May 27	5	45	60	
Squash / Pumpkin	Trans+DS	April 22	April 29	May 13	June 3	May 13	June 10	15	85	120	
Swiss Chard	Trans+DS	April 8	April 22	May 20	June 3	April 22	June 24	5	50	75	
Tomatillo	Trans	March 25	April 8	June 3	June 10	x	x	15	75	100	
Tomato (cherry)	Trans	March 25	April 8	May 20	June 10	x	x	15	65	75	
Tomato (paste)	Trans	March 25	April 8	May 20	June 10	x	x	15	70	90	
Tomato (slicing)	Trans	March 25	April 8	May 20	June 10	x	x	15	80	95	
Turnip	DS	x	x	x	x	April 22	June 3	5	45	70	
Zucchini	Trans+DS	April 29	May 6	May 13	June 3	May 13	June 24	15	50	70	

DS = Direct Sow Trans = Transplant (start indoors or buy seedlings) x = does not apply

www.foodconnections.ca

ABOUT COMMUNITY FOOD CONNECTIONS ASSOCIATION (CFCA)

Community Food Connections Association is a non-profit organization based in Medicine Hat, Alberta. Launched in 2003, we have been working to support food security in the community through education, programming, partnerships and policy support for improvements in food, nutrition, health and local agriculture.

Our programs include the Good Food Club, Community Kitchens, the Local Food & Producers Directory, Medicine Hat Community Gardens, and Growing Gardeners Education Program. To find out more, head over to our website, FoodConnections.ca, or social media accounts:

 [@COMMUNITYFOODCONNECTIONS](https://www.facebook.com/COMMUNITYFOODCONNECTIONS)


COMMUNITY
Food Connections
ASSOCIATION

[@CFCA_MH](https://www.instagram.com/CFCA_MH)

 + 

WWW.FOODCONNECTIONS.CA

PAGE 07