

GROWING GARDENERS

NEWSLETTER FOR SOUTH EASTERN ALBERTA



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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

PRAIRIE SMOKE

Geum triflorum

Prairie smoke is a versatile plant that forms striking feathery seedheads. A lovely addition to the edge of a bed or in a mixed native planting. Avoid growing it too close to taller species to fully enjoy its fern-like leaves and nodding flowers.

Type: Perennial

Family: Rose (Rosaceae)

Height: 20 - 50 cm

Flower: Reddish-purple

Bloom: May - June

Light: Full sun, part shade

Soil: Dry to moist

Supports:  

Start from: Stratified seed or division in early spring.

Benefits:

- Tolerant of many soils
- Source of nectar and pollen
- Deer resistant
- Slowly spreads by rhizomes



BEATING THE BOLT

Rhubarb is a versatile perennial in the garden and one of the first harvests of the season. Bolting, when the plant starts to flower, can take away from stalk production. Here's what to do about it.

LET'S TALK ABOUT BOLTING

Perennials plants, like rhubarb (*Rheum × hybridum*), grow leaves early in the season, then form flowers that mature to produce seeds when pollinated. This is part of their natural life-cycle but for rhubarb, the formation of flowers and seeds can reduce the quality and quantity of the harvest. Factors that can affect bolting include the plant's age, soil fertility, drought, temperature and the type of rhubarb grown.

RHUBARB MAINTENANCE

It is a good idea to divide rhubarb crowns in early spring every 4-5 years to rejuvenate them. Topdress the soil around the rhubarb with 1" of compost every year. Rhubarb prefers cooler temperatures, so consider moving any plants located in particularly warm/sunny sites.

EYES ON THE PRIZE

Even young plants in perfect conditions will eventually begin to flower, which we refer to as bolting when not desirable. Monitor rhubarb for flower stalks forming from the crown. These will be round and hollow, having more than one leaf attached and lumpy flower buds.



CUT IT OUT

Once flower stalks emerge, they should be pulled or cut as close to the crown as possible. By continuing to remove them as they appear, the plant will eventually give up for the season and continue to form the good parts (technically the part we eat is the petiole, or leaf stalk). Remember, it is best to harvest less than 1/2 of the plant at any time so it can come back next year.

Reference: Calgary Horticultural Society. (n.d.). *Prairie smoke; three-flowered avens; old man's whiskers*. Calgary Horticultural Society.
<https://www.calhort.org/plants/prairie-smoke-three-flowered-avens-old-mans-whiskers/>

EATING WEEDS

Lemony Lentil + Lamb's Quarters Soup

Lamb's Quarters is an easy to identify nuisance weed, making it perfect for this quick and easy soup. Best of all, according to Mother Earth News, it has 8-10 times as much calcium and Vitamin C as spinach! As with any foraged food, it is vital to be 100% confident in identification and know that plants have not been sprayed with herbicide/pesticide.

ABOUT THE WEED

While we consider lamb's quarters (*Chenopodium album*) to be a weed, it is cultivated in other parts of the world as a grain, spinach alternative, and animal feed. This annual plant is in the amaranth family (Amaranthaceae) and is commonly found in gardens here in Medicine Hat. Harvest some leaves for this recipe.

PLANT DESCRIPTION

Leaves of lamb's quarters are blueish-green, arranged alternately and typically have a toothed margin. Leaf shape is deltoid (triangular) to lanceolate and surface is covered in fine white powder. At maturity, the plant can reach over 1 m in height and the stem may have a pinkish hue. When crushed, there should be no distinct smell to the leaves.



INGREDIENTS

- 2 Tbs oil** (olive, avocado, refined coconut)
- 1 med-lrg yellow onion**, diced
- 2 cloves garlic**, crushed
- pinch chile flakes**
- 1/2 cup green lentils** (uncooked)
- 8-10 cups stock** (vegetable or chicken)
- 2 Tbs lovage or parsley**, chopped
- 1 potato**, peeled + 1 cm cubed
- 3 cups lamb's quarters**, washed + chopped
- 1 lemon**, zest + juice (or 1 Tbs preserved lemon)

DIRECTIONS

1. Heat oil in a large pot over med-low heat. Add onion and a pinch of salt and cook, stirring, until translucent (8-10 min).

2. Add garlic and chile flakes and stir until fragrant (1 min max).
3. Add lentils, 8 cups stock and lovage/parsley. Increase heat to boil, then reduce to simmer for 5 minutes.
4. Add potato and cook until almost soft (8 min) then add lamb's quarters and lemon zest. Continue cooking until potatoes and lentils are soft.
5. Taste and adjust with salt, pepper and lemon juice. For a less thick soup, add more stock. Garnish with fresh parsley or lovage.

WATER-WISE GARDEN TIPS

EFFICIENT IRRIGATION

THE RIGHT IRRIGATION SYSTEM CAN SAVE TIME, CONSERVE WATER AND SUPPORT HEALTHY PLANTS.

+50%
Water consumption increase in summer.

339 LITRES / PERSON / DAY
Medicine Hat has the highest residential water consumption in Alberta.

Slow, deep watering is best for plants + the planet.

Up to **1/2** of water used in landscapes is lost to wind, evaporation and run-off.



LEAST EFFICIENT (65-75%)

MOST EFFICIENT (>90%)

| | SPRINKLER | HAND | SOAKER | DRIP |
|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| COST: | \$ - \$\$\$ | \$ | \$ - \$\$ | \$\$ - \$\$\$ |
| BEST FOR: | LARGE AREAS | BEDS | BEDS | BEDS |
| DOWN-SIDE: | RUN-OFF + EROSION | TIME CONSUMING | NOT GOOD ON SLOPES | INITIAL SET-UP TRICKY |
| WATCH FOR: | LEAKS + OVER-WATERING | DEEPER SOIL IS MOIST (10+ cm) | SOAKER HOSE TOO LONG (max length 30m) | IRREGULAR WATERING + BLOCKAGE |



Water-Wise Garden Tips is a series developed by Genevieve Mathieu from Community Food Connections Association in partnership with the Medicine Hat & District Horticultural Association.



JUNE CALENDAR

| sun | mon | tue | wed | thurs | fri | sat |
|--|---|--|---|-----------|-----------|---|
| 2 Transplant: Cucumber Eggplant Melon Peppers Squash Tomato | 3 Sow Outdoors: Beans Beets Carrots Corn Cucumbers | 4 Gr. onion (bulb) Kale/Collards Lettuce (shade) Squash Zucchini | 5 CFCA Garden Club | 6 | 7 | 8 Farmers Market |
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| 16 Sow Outdoors: Beans Beets Carrots Corn Cucumbers | 17 Gr. onion (bulb) Lettuce (shade) Squash Zucchini | 18 | 19 Root Cellar Mom Market | 20 | 21 | 22 Downtown Block Party Farmers Market |
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SCIENTIST FOR A DAY

Interpretive Program @ Police Point Park

Sunday, June 9, 1:30-3:00 pm.

Call the Nature Line (403.529.6225) to register for this free event.

NATURE TRIVIA (ADULT EDITION)

Interpretive Program @ Police Point Park

Saturday, June 15, 7-9 pm.

Call the Nature Line (403.529.6225) to register for this by-donation event.

ROOT CELLAR MOM MARKET

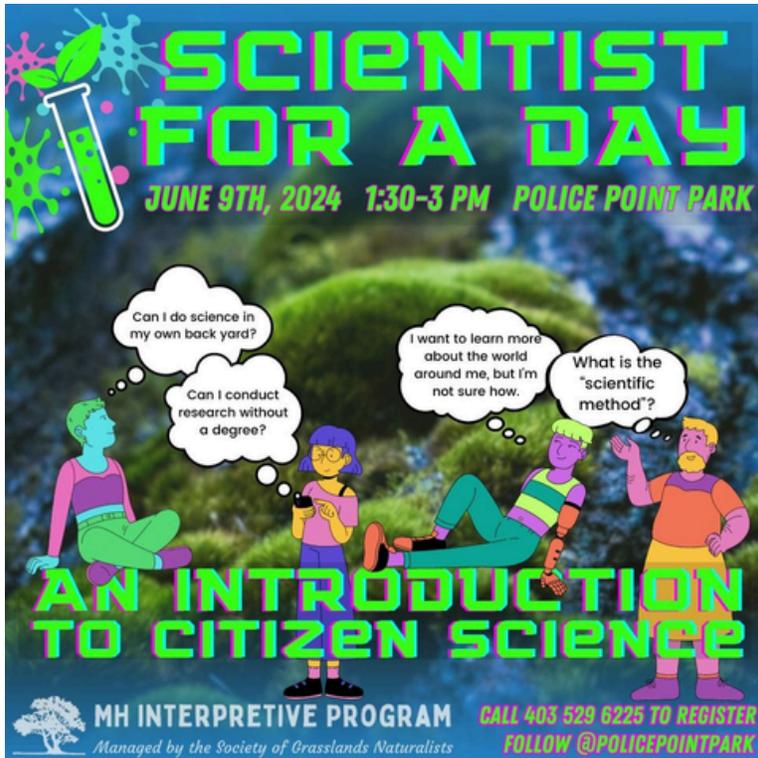
Root Cellar Food & Wellness Hub

Wednesday, June 19, 4-6:30pm.

Check out the garden behind the Root Cellar for vendors, food trucks, garden stuff and more.

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

JUNE EVENTS



SCIENTIST FOR A DAY
JUNE 9TH, 2024 1:30-3 PM POLICE POINT PARK

Can I do science in my own back yard?
Can I conduct research without a degree?
I want to learn more about the world around me, but I'm not sure how.
What is the "scientific method"?

AN INTRODUCTION TO CITIZEN SCIENCE

MH INTERPRETIVE PROGRAM *Managed by the Society of Grasslands Naturalists* CALL 403 529 6225 TO REGISTER FOLLOW @POLICEPOINTPARK



block PARTY

SATURDAYS
at Towne Square

12 - 4 PM

“This summer, discover the heart of our community at Towne Square's Block Party - Saturdays from noon to 4 p.m. It's where neighbours become friends, and the community comes alive.

Guests can expect a changing lineup of free activities and games for all ages, loosely centered around a new theme each week.

2024 schedule of events

- June 15 – Celebrating Nature
- June 22 – Celebrating Indigeneity
- June 29 – Celebrating Childhood”

WONDERING ABOUT WEEDS?

NEIGHBORHOOD WEED IDENTIFICATION AND CONTROL WORKSHOP



Saturday June 8 from 10 am to noon
Riverside Park, Riverside neighborhood

Saturday June 22 from 10 am to noon
Veiner Centre playground, North flats neighborhood

Meet your neighbors and learn more about controlling weeds and other invasive species in your yards and local natural areas. Hourly weed walk, free resources, prizes

Sponsored by the Hat Creekside Stewardship group, Grasslands Naturalists, and the City of Medicine Hat.



seawa
YOUR CONNECTION TO THE WATERSHED
South East Alberta Watershed Alliance

Annual General Meeting

South East Alberta Watershed Alliance - Annual General Meeting

June 11, 7 to 9 pm

The Fireside Room, Medicine Hat Exhibition Grounds

Free and open to the public.

SEAWA membership is also free and all members are eligible to vote, so please join us!
Board positions are also available and open to members.

For more:
Dwayne.rogness@seawa.ca
or (403) 580-8980.

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.



THIS FREE, HANDS-ON GARDEN CLUB COVERS DIFFERENT TOPICS RELEVANT TO OUR CLIMATE THROUGHOUT THE GROWING SEASON.

June 5, 7pm - Osborne Park Community Garden
behind 1707 7th Ave. NE
Growing in Raised Beds + Containers

June 12, 7pm - Root Cellar Food & Wellness Hub
behind 440 Maple Ave. SE, access from 5th St. SE
Building Healthy Soil

June 26, 7pm - The Food Forest
behind 2948 Dunmore Rd. SE
Understanding Insects

Registration is not required.
Children welcome if accompanied by an adult guardian. 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).



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:

