



NEWS TO GROW BY!

April 2022

2022 Registration

We have been registering gardeners since January 1st and have confirmed more than 435 gardeners! We still have plots available at Airport, Chapel Hill, Ellsworth, and a few Discovery Garden beds at County Farm and Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living.

Here is hoping that 2022 will be another great gardening year for everyone!

2022 Plant Sale

The 2022 Project Grow Plant Sale will be held on May 7th, from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm (note the reduced hours) at the hoophouse at Dawn Farm, 6633 Stoney Creek Rd., Ypsilanti, 48197. Project Grow's 2020 and 2021 sales were greatly modified because of the pandemic. Most of those changes will still be in effect in 2022.

What's the Same

Every year Project Grow offers hard to find heirloom tomatoes, peppers and basil. This year we are offering 80 varieties of tomatoes, 25 varieties of peppers, and 2 varieties of basil. In addition, we will be offering two ornamentals, lisianthus and sweet peas.

The peppers and basil will be started at the end of February and the tomatoes in mid-March. These are large, husky plants sold in 3.5" pots. We are growing them in our hoop house at Dawn Farm so they are already acclimated to cool temperatures, outdoor sunshine and spring breezes.

Tomatoes, peppers, and basil cannot tolerate freezing temperatures and must be brought inside or protected from late spring frost. Lisianthus and sweet peas are both cold hardy and should be planted out right away.

Advance Ordering

- This year we will charge a \$5 processing fee on each advance order. We do this because a significant amount of work is involved pulling orders. This fee is added automatically to your total.
- To make filling orders easier, orders must be in multiples of half a flat (9 plants). You can order 9, 18, 27, 36 etc. plants.
- Advance orders must be placed online directly from the [catalog](#).
- We will accept up to 100 advance orders, twice as many as in 2021 **Right now we have received 80 orders.** Once we reach 100 orders, we will close down that option so no more orders can be placed.
- Pick up your order on **Saturday May 7th between 10am and 12 noon at Dawn Farm** 6633 Stony Creek Road in Ypsilanti, 48197. This is the only day and time orders may be picked up. If you cannot pick up your order by noon, please do not place an advance order!

There is always the possibility of disasters and crop failures with plants, but we will try to keep the list up to date if this happens.

Bed Repair at Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living

Site Coordinator Beth Wichterman wrote and received a grant from Ann Arbor Farm and Garden to refurbish 5 of

the 12 beds at Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living. AACIL agreed to pay for refurbishing a 6th bed, and all beds will be repaired when work is completed.

The grant pays for materials but labor is still provided by volunteers. A group went to work on March 17th, and completed two beds. Two more beds were completed on March 19th and March 25th along with fence repairs.



Project Grow's 2022 SEED SHARE

We had an enormous response to the seed share this year. We have shuttered the order form while we catch up on orders and inventory. We do not expect to open it again due to decreasing supply. Email community@projectgrowgardens.org with any questions. Read on some light reading about seed starting.

Need some help getting started?

These links can help get you started.

- Indoor Seed Starting Under Lights: [PG Seed Starting Article](#)
- Seed Sowing Instructions - lots of the info you would find on a retail seed packet for planning [PG Seed Planting Info](#)
- Seed Shelf Life - all of the seeds we share are from previous growing years. How long are various seeds good for? Check out this link to Johnny's Seeds for an easy to read chart to understand why we can offer these seeds. [Johnny's Seed Shelf Life Listing](#)

Indoor Sowing

A basic shopping list for INDOOR seed starting supplies might include:

- Premixed soilless mix (no fertilizer is needed for seed start mixes)
- 6 packs (with holes) to fill a tray or support the number of seeds you want to start.
- Trays (no holes) sufficient to hold the 6 packs you have.
- Clear plastic cover or dome to support humidity during germination.
- Labels - everything will look the same when it starts coming up. Use the labels to make sure you know what you're planting out.
- Heat mats - some argument over whether these are essential. But all agree one gets the best results using them.
- Adjustable lights (fluorescent or LED) Adjustable means you can lower and raise the lights as the plants grow.

DIY Soilless Mix Recipe:

- A bag of vermiculite or perlite.
- A similar amount of coconut coir or peat moss.
- Combine in a bucket/bag at 1 to 1 ratio.
- The best way to wet these is soaking from below, especially if you have planted the seeds.

Winter Sowing

Don't have the space/resources needed to start seeds indoors? Try Winter Sowing. There is a lot of information online about winter sowing provided by bloggers, YouTube videos and social media pages. Winter sowing teaches you a bit more about the kind of seed you're sowing and the conditions it needs to be successful. It also moves the whole production outside. Yep, outside.

Want to learn more? Check out these Winter Sowing sources:

[Blogger, Kevin Lee Jacobs](#)

Project Grow Gardener, Deb Nystrom's [Winter Sowing Class](#) (and more info below from Deb)

[Winter Sowers Facebook Group](#) (one of many)

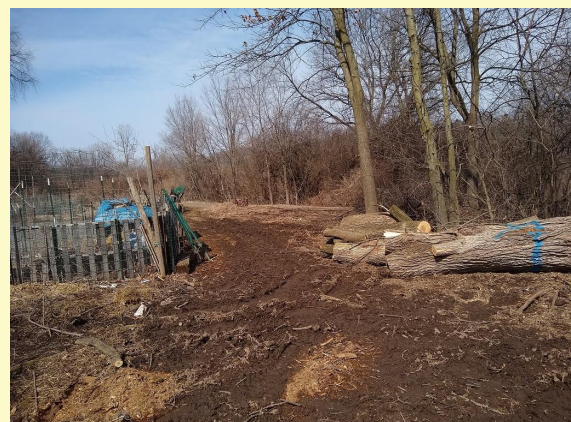
A BIG shout out to Downtown Home and Garden and ACE Barnes Hardware. We wouldn't be able to offer the variety and quantity of seeds we have if it weren't for their generosity. They both offer a majority of the supplies needed to start your seeds early and have staff on hand to help answer questions.

Leaf Mulch

Leaves for mulching are available for pickup at our Ellsworth garden site behind Community Mental Health at 2140 E Ellsworth. They are in the back of the parking lot next to the dumpster enclosure.

Tree Trimming at County Farm

Many thanks to Washtenaw County Parks Maintenance for making some County Farm gardens sunnier this year!





Flowers in the Garden

Hello! My name is Alyce Machcinski. My husband and I garden a couple plots with a small group of our friends at the County Farm location. This will be our fourth year gardening with Project Grow as a group, and the sixth year for me and my husband.

I started sharing bits of what we've been learning in the newsletters last year. You can find our thoughts and tips on planning, layout, etc. [here](#):

[Project Grow: Planning, Layout, Pests, and More](#)

It might seem strange to add flowers to garden, especially when it's small, but we've found a lot of benefits from including them!

Pollinators

Probably the biggest benefit we've seen from including flowers in our garden every year is the amount of pollinators they attract. Though many plants like tomatoes are self-pollinating, they definitely still benefit from the help from bees and other pollinators. The bright colors of the flowers attract lots of pollinators to the garden and while they are in the area, they are more likely to visit vegetables too!

Flowers give you early returns in the garden. Whether you are direct sowing or planting started plants many annuals will start blooming before the vegetables in your garden will start producing. It adds some early color, and, depending on what you plant, you get the added bonus of cut flowers, attracting pollinators, deterring pests, and some are even edible!



Pest Deterrent

Marigolds are the most well known deterrents against pests—both insects and rabbits. Nasturtiums and a few other plants are good at repelling pests too. It's not too hard to find lists of flowers and plants that deter insects online.

Flowers Can Be Food Too

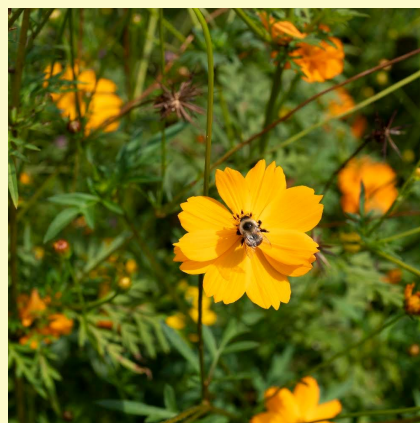
Though not all of them, quite a few of the flowers we plant in the garden are actually edible! We've had a lot of fun adding petals to salads or using them as garnish on other dishes.

Crowd Out the Weeds

Interplanting flowers with your other plants can help cut down on the weeds. They help shade and out-compete the weeds...just don't overcrowd your crops! We still have to weed around the flowers and other plants, but they do help cut down on them.

Enjoyment

This one seems pretty obvious, but it's worth mentioning! I really like flowers and my co-gardeners enjoy them too. The added colors and textures in the garden certainly help make it pretty. We enjoy the added beauty in the garden, especially while we wait for everything else to grow and start producing. Many of the flowers we grow make for great cut flowers in vases as well!



Some of our favorite flowers to grow:

- **Marigolds** - French marigold roots can kill bad nematodes in the soil; the scent of both French and Mexican marigolds can deter insect pests and rabbits; Mexican marigolds make nice cut flowers as they grow on long stems

- **Bachelor Buttons** - an edible flower without a strong flavor; it's great for pollinators and is a great cut flower
- **Calendula** - beneficial for pollinators and other helpful insects; it can be used as a trap crop for aphids and other pests
- **Nasturtium** - we have had luck deterring cucumber and squash beetles by intercropping nasturtium; as an added bonus the flowers and leaves make a great peppery addition to salads and the leaves make a great pesto!
- **Sunflowers** - can draw aphids and ants away from other plants. The seeds, buds and petals are all edible too!
- **Amaranth**- technically a grain, the flowers and stalks on these are quite pretty; the leaves can also be treated like spinach
- **Celosia** - these aren't edible, but they sure are pretty and really attracted pollinators for us last year and make a great cut or dried flower
- **Dahlias** - these are great cut flowers and they repel nematodes; historically the tubers have been eaten but most modern cultivars are not flavorful and may have been treated with chemicals that make them unsuitable for consumption
- **Cosmos** - most cosmos are not edible, but they attract lots of pollinators are great cut flowers



Project Grow's 50th Anniversary

This year is Project Grow's 50th Anniversary and we are so excited to celebrate and preserve the legacy that Project Grow has built over the last 50 years! Read on to learn more about our plans for 2022!

Project Grow's History (excerpted from an article by Nelson Meade)

Fifty years ago, in 1972, Project Grow was created, the work of several determined residents of Ann Arbor, who envisioned gardening space for residents who wished to grow their own foods. Leading this group was Susan Drake (the first director of Project Grow), who met with city and county officials to get the space and funds with which to do so. Supportive officials, including Nelson Meade, then an Ann Arbor city council member and later a Washtenaw county commissioner, also worked to get it off the ground. While working for the creation of County Farm Park (which now bears his name), Meade also secured space for a Project Grow garden site there. That garden has flourished and is now Project Grow's largest and most popular site.

Over the succeeding decades, Project Grow has flourished, too, and now manages some 20 sites throughout the city to provide the space and skills for those who wish to garden. But it could not have been done without the support of organizations whose goals complement those of Project Grow: Leslie Science and Nature Center, Ann Arbor Public Schools, Ann Arbor City Parks, Matthaei Botanical Gardens and Nichols Arboretum, Food Gatherers, the Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living and various area churches and other landowners. Nor could it have been done without the help and support of the many generations of Ann Arborites who share the same vision as those early residents and who are now able to grow their own food. Project Grow Community Gardens is fortunate to be a part of this community.

For a more detailed history of Project Grow by Nelson Meade, including personal recollections of founding days, click [here](#).



**** Anniversary Events & Volunteers**

We will be celebrating throughout the year with seasonal events (Plant Sale, Tomato Tasting, Seed Swap, Opening Weekend, etc) as well as unique events created specifically for our anniversary! Events will be announced in upcoming newsletters, so stay tuned! If you have an idea that you'd like to put in the suggestion box or perhaps you'd like to help volunteer with this year's events, please email anniversary@projectgrowgardens.org with the subject line "Events and Volunteers":

**** Legacy Video Series**

As part of the 50th Anniversary celebration, we're featuring our past and present growers in a series of videos, telling the stories of those who have made our community what it is today! Whether you're a current gardener or haven't gardened with Project Grow since the 70s or 80s, we're inviting all gardeners to take part in answering the following three questions:

- **How / When did you join Project Grow?**
- **What are one or two of your fondest memories with Project Grow?**
- **What has inspired you the most about Project Grow in your time with us?**

If you'd like to be a part of the project, please send the following information with the subject "50th Anniversary Legacy" to anniversary@projectgrow.org with the subject line "Video Series":

- **Name**
- **Contact Information (email/phone)**
- **Your answers to each of the questions**

We look forward to hearing from you and will be in touch to schedule a short video interview.

Spring Classes Through Rec and Ed

Project Grow will be offering five additional classes the spring semester through Ann Arbor Rec and Ed. All the classes:

- Last 2 hours from 7pm-9pm.
- Cost \$15.
- Will be held online.
- Are for ages 18 and up.

Tomatoes and Chilis in the Organic Garden

Thursday April 14th

Secrets to growing healthy and productive tomato and pepper plants will be shared in this class. Starting your own plants from seed is a great way to tap the incredible array of heirloom tomato and pepper varieties. Several methods will be presented and discussed. Techniques for pruning, pinching, mulching, and the use of compost and proper vine support will be presented. Learn how to save seeds for future planting. Common diseases and their control will be discussed. New developments in the breeding of heirloom tomato varieties will be reviewed along with a list of the instructor's favorites. Instructor: Royer Held

[Register here!](#)

The Pillars of Ecosystem Gardening

Thursday May 19th

This course will explore the five pillars of ecosystem gardening:

1. Duff layer maintenance.
2. Mindful water management.
3. Promotion of biodiversity and ecological succession.
4. Development of ecological resilience.
5. Enrichment of pollinator habitats.

The study of ecosystems can provide insight into your gardening style and techniques and can help increase the productivity of your garden. Instructor: Joet Roema

[Register here!](#)

Exploring Eco-Machines for Solving Environmental Problems

Thursday April 28th

An Eco-Machine is a custom-assembly of several complementary ecosystems that work in concert to mimic how nature solves specific environmental problems. Invented and pioneered by the John Todd Ecological Design, Eco-Machines have proven able to handle large-scale municipal and industrial waste streams. This class introduces the concept for its teaching value in environmental education and in building ecosystem gardens that float to restore water quality. Preparation of this class is partly supported by Jim Bates of SENDEnergy.org and David Benjamin of Aqua Naturae. Instructor: Joet Roema

[Register here!](#)

Seed Potatoes, Potato Seed and Sweet Potato Slips

Thursday April 21st

Learn about the origins of potatoes and sweet potatoes and the different ways they can be grown. Special attention will be paid to the cultivation of indigenous potato varieties from Bolivia, Peru, and Chili, but the methods are the same, regardless of the varieties you grow. Growing potatoes from true potato seed is becoming increasingly popular. Learn why and how you can participate! The Michigan growing season is too short for sweet potatoes to produce seed but there are many varieties that may be grown in a Michigan garden with great success. Sweet potatoes are grown from slips, which are shoots that start to grow from a tuber. You can start your own slips or purchase them from mail order nurseries. Learn how to successfully grow sweet potatoes in the garden. Instructor: Royer Held

[Register here!](#)

Integrated Pest Management

Thursday June 2nd

How do you protect your garden from all the creatures large and small that want to share in your harvest? Find out who they are and what you can do to control them without resorting to pesticides. The four strategies of Integrated Pest Control - cultural, physical, biological, and chemical will be discussed in detail. Topics will include maintenance of plant and soil health, the benefits of crop rotation and companion planting, the importance of garden hygiene, and the role beneficial organisms play in keeping your garden growing. Learn what it takes to keep pest outbreaks from occurring and how to get along with rabbits, deer, squirrels, chipmunks, and groundhogs. Instructor: Royer Held

[Register here!](#)

Winter Sowing Results

Our Catholic Social Services site coordinator, Deb Nystrom, taught a free online class in January on winter seed sowing. On the first day of spring, Deb sent us a picture showing some early results.



Project Grow Gardens Around Town

- Garlic sprouting at Wines
- Photo collage of Catholic Social Services

