



NEWS TO GROW BY!

January 2022

2022 Registration Is Ready!

Although it feels like the 2021 season just ended, **registration for 2022** is up and [available on our website](#). Returning gardeners should have already received an e-mail reminder on January 1st.

Please remember that we ask returning gardeners to register by February 1st. We have a list of eager new gardeners waiting to take available plots and would like to assign them sooner rather than later. If you know you will not be returning to your plot, please let us know ASAP by sending an e-mail to info@projectgrowgardens.org.

This past year was difficult in many ways but it turned out to be a pretty good year for gardens. Here is hoping that 2022 will be another great gardening year for everyone!

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.

Fencing Surcharge for Food Gatherers, Hunt and Wines

Beginning in 2021, the cost of a plot at our Food Gatherers, Hunt, and Wines sites have included a \$15 / half plot, \$30 / full plot surcharge to pay for fencing. Project Grow has historically never paid for fencing. However, increasing deer pressure at Hunt and Wines required a deer fence and permanent deer fences are expensive. The situation at each site is described below.

Hunt Park

For several years, Hunt Park gardeners used a light plastic fence for deer that they financed themselves. In accordance with Ann Arbor Parks requirements, they also put it up and took it down every year. This worked well for several years but in 2018, some deer learned they could rear up and tear through the plastic with their front hooves. Each time the gardeners repaired the damage, the deer did it again, and the garden was decimated.

To save a popular and successful community garden, Project Grow received clearance from Ann Arbor Parks to put up a permanent deer fence at Hunt. As a pilot effort, Project Grow decided to pay the \$1600 for the fence and ask gardeners for donations until the fence was paid for. This method sounded good but was not practical. The site coordinator was put in the awkward position of pestering gardeners for money each year, and it was also unfair because only a subset of gardeners donated money.

Scio

Scio has paid off their fence so this year there will be no fence surcharge in 2022.

Wines

For the past couple years the Wines garden also began to suffer from significant deer damage. In 2020 the gardeners decided they needed a deer fence. The gardeners created a design for the fence and received clearance from the Wines administration as well as Ann Arbor Public Schools to build it. They also volunteered to put up the fence. However, the estimated cost was \$1000 and the garden is small with only five plots. The gardeners asked Project Grow for help paying for the fence

Food Gatherers

The Food Gatherers site already had a deer fence from when it was used by Food Gatherers, but it is sorely in need of repair. While the fence does not need to be replaced, the costs are still significant because the fenced area is very large.

Fencing Surcharge

The fencing surcharge will pay for the fences at the three sites in 2-7 years. Project Grow will keep track of the money spent on the fence at each site. The amount paid with the surcharge by gardeners at each site will be credited against the cost. The Food Gatherers fence will be paid for in only a few years while Wines will probably take up to 7 years. Once the fences have been paid for the surcharge will be removed.

Free Project Grow Class on Winter Seed Sowing

Project Grow gardener and site coordinator Deb Nystrom will be offering a free class on winter seed sowing on **Tuesday January 18th at 7 pm**. The class will be held online with Zoom. [Register for the class here](#) and we will send you a link.

Winter Sowing

Learn how to use inexpensive recycled containers to grow perennials and certain annuals using Winter Sowing. The cold, quiet days of midwinter are an excellent time to try this mini-greenhouse method that capitalizes on freeze thaw cycles and the natural germination schedules built into each and every seed that thrives on this method. Deb has used winter sowing successfully to start new perennial beds and a variety of garden annuals, herbs and grasses.

Date: Tuesday, January 18th, 2022 7 p.m. Online, Zoom

Winter Classes Through Rec and Ed

Project Grow will be offering five classes during the winter 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.

Adventures in the Home Orchard

Thursday January 20th

What are the challenges and rewards of growing your own orchard crops in your home landscape? Which tree crops and native fruit varieties are suited to organic cultivation in a Michigan home orchard? This class will introduce you to the wide variety of fruit and nut trees that can be grown successfully in your backyard. Gain an understanding of the technical aspects of growing including how to obtain, situate, plant, and train different kinds of trees and how to grow high quality fruit without using insecticides and fungicides. Instructor: Royer Held

[Register here!](#)

The Science and the Art of Compost Gardening

Thursday January 27th

This course highlights and illustrates tips and techniques of Compost Gardening, the practice of gardening that is mindful of improving soil health. Maintaining soil health is key to gardening practices required for continuous production of healthy crops. The class is based on experiences of County Master Composters and Extension Master Gardeners. Instructor: Joet Reoma

[Register here!](#)

Growing currants, gooseberries, and elderberries in the home landscape

Thursday February 3rd

Currants, gooseberries, and elderberries are handsome plants that produce delicious fruit that can be hard to find in the market. They are easier to grow than many other kinds of fruit, are small enough to fit into even small yards, and bear fruit at an early age. This short class will cover how to choose, grow, harvest, and use currants (red, black, and white), gooseberries, and elderberries here in southeastern Michigan. We will discuss which varieties to grow, and where, how and when to plant, fertilize, prune, propagate, control pests, and care for these plants. Instructor: Dave Strayer

[Register here!](#)

Month-By-Month Gardening in Michigan

Thursday February 23th

Increase the productivity of your garden by learning the best time to plant, cultivate, and harvest vegetable varieties that do well in Michigan. Vegetables belong to different plant families that have distinct growing cycles and seasons. Recognizing this helps develop plans for gardening that maximize yields by taking advantage of the optimal times for plant growth and development. Material for the class is based on research and the experiences of Extension Master Gardeners and the Smart Gardening program of Michigan State University Extension. Particular attention will be given to backyard and community gardening. Instructor: Joet Reoma

[Register here!](#)

Fundamentals of Successful Organic Gardening

Thursday March 3rd

Learn how to develop and maintain a healthy organic soil, the key to successful organic gardening. Understand the role that microorganisms play in building soil and promoting plant health. Discover how to employ composting, mulching and cover crops to build soil productivity, increase microbial activity and provide timely release of plant nutrients. Gain an understanding about what vegetable varieties work best in an organic garden and how to plant, cultivate, support and manage their harvest as well as the basic principles of integrated pest management. Instructor: Royer Held

[Register here!](#)

Project Grow Gardens Around Town

Reading left to right like text:

- Two composite pictures from Catholic Social Services
- A picture from County Farm Section A and one from Section B
- Two pictures from Johnson Preserve
- Three pictures from Matthaei
- Scio in December





