



N E W S T O G R O W B Y !

March 2022

2022 Registration

We have been registering gardeners since January 1st and have already confirmed more than 390 gardeners! We still have plots available at Airport, Buhr, Chapel Hill, County Farm, Ellsworth, Scio and all three Discovery Gardens at County Farm, Leslie Science and Nature Center and Ann Arbor Center for Independent Living

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

Round Up When Shopping at People's Food Co-op in March!

This month you can visit the People's Food Co-op at 216 N 4th Ave, near Kerrytown Market, to not only get your groceries for the week but also support Project Grow through the "Round Up Change" program! Choose to round up your purchase to the next dollar every time you buy to raise funds for Project Grow's Reduced Fee Plot Program.

People's Food Co-Op will be displaying information about our organization on both of their Community Boards and giving out our flyers to shoppers to raise awareness of Project Grow. While there, feel free to talk with the staff about our 50th anniversary year, your Project Grow experiences, and share the things you enjoy about gardening! This special fundraising program ends at the end of March, so make sure you make it back to People's Food Co-op as often as you can to support our fellow gardeners at our 20+ locations who find themselves in need of funding support.



PEOPLE'S FOOD CO-OP
NATURAL FOODS MARKET & DELI

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. 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.

Free Seeds! Project Grow's 2022 SEED SHARE

As we slowly navigate our way out of a pandemic and back to something we all recognize, the annual Seed Share event will once again happen online. We have a lot of seeds to share with you. Some quantities are limited. There is a limit of 15 packets per order/household of which 4 can be tomatoes.

We encourage you to share with other gardeners. Most seed packets contain enough seeds for several gardeners to use. Start the seeds and share the starts with your gardening neighbors, friends and family.

We're open to whomever needs seeds. You don't have to be a Project Grow gardener, current or previous. You only have to pledge that you'll try starting seeds this year and hopefully grow a bounty for yourself, your family and maybe even some for donation. So pass the link on if you know someone who might be interested.

This entire effort is runs on volunteer power. Please do not place an order if you're not committed to picking the seeds up or planting them.

Things to Keep in Mind When Ordering

Use an email address that you monitor. You will receive a confirmation email once you place your order but if there are questions or additional instructions, we would like to handle them quickly.

Request seed that you will actually plant this year so that there is enough to go around.

Tomato Seeds: the deadline to pickup any tomato seeds is April 15. This will give you just enough time to get them started whether indoors or out. Orders designated for pickup at the Plant Sale will not have any tomato seeds.

The order form will close on May 1.

Ready to place a seed order? Click on the link: [Seed Share Order Form](#)

Order Pickup Options

There are four options for order collection this year: Downtown Home and Garden, a Project Grow volunteer's front porch, County Farm Park or the Plant Sale.

Downtown Home and Garden

Saturday, March 5 from 10:30 am to 1:30 pm (appointment only)

210 S Ashley St, Ann Arbor, MI 48104

We will be in the corner of the parking lot between the sidewalk and greenhouse.

Please be mindful of DHG's agreement to offer this outpost. Their parking lot is for shopping/customers. If you are only picking up seeds, use the loading zone on the west side of Ashley or any street parking around.

You will need to schedule a pick up time slot. You can follow the link within the order form or if you missed the option, the link is here: <https://signup.com/go/haBZjoh>

Why do I need an appointment? Appointments help us make sure you get the correct order and provide a couple of moments to answer questions. Also, we'll be set up outside. While we hope the day is pleasant, if it's not, we know how long our volunteers need to be there for you.

Front Porch Pickup

North side of Ann Arbor on a mutually agreeable date and time frame.

County Farm Park

Sunday, April 10 from 1pm to 3pm (weather dependent)

Plant Sale

Saturday, May 7 between 10 am and 12 noon.

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](#)

[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.

Start Seeds or Buy Plants?

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](#)

Every year we start thinking and dreaming about the garden in January or February to start making plans for what we want to grow, what seeds we want to start, and what we want to buy as started plants. It might seem early to be already thinking and planning, but thinking about spring gets us through winter and the time to start seeds is right around the corner (in fact, a lot of peppers benefit from being started in late February to early March).

Some plants really benefit from being started indoors, either because they have a particularly long growing season or to get earlier harvests! The plants you buy in the spring were started anywhere from 4-8 weeks earlier depending on the plant. Project Grow offers an amazing free seed share (article above) if you are interested in trying to start some plants from seed!



Cabbage seedlings

SPACE! Seed starting can take a lot of space, but is very rewarding. You'll need the space for your initial seed cells and likely a grow light set up—the cloudy short days we have in Michigan this time of year means that your windowsill might not get enough light to start healthy plants. You'll also need to move your plants to larger pots once they start to outgrow their initial containers. If you don't, they'll become root bound, their growth will be stunted and your transplants will be weak. Consider limiting the number of plants and varieties you start based on your available space.

VARIETY AVAILABILITY: We like to grow an assortment of varieties in our garden and as a group gravitate towards heirloom varieties we find “unusual”, “interesting”, or “weird”. When deciding what to start from seed, we try to focus on varieties we know are less likely to be found in a local plant sale or nursery. Luckily, our Project Grow plant sale (article above) and several of our local growers have a pretty interesting assortment of varieties so it's not hard to get an assortment even if you don't want to start seeds.

HOW SET ARE YOU ON HAVING A SPECIFIC VARIETY?: If you are dead set on having a specific variety, it might be a good idea to start your own seed. We have all experienced the disappointment of getting excited about a specific tomato or pepper and not being able to find a started plant for sale anywhere.

COST: While buying started plants is certainly easier and less time and space consuming, buying pre-started plants does add up. There is an initial cost for supplies to start seeds, but many of the tools like lights, trays, and containers/pots can be reused for future years. Getting creative with containers and buying growing medium in bulk can help cut down on those costs and overall help save some money. Saving and poking holes in yogurt cups, sour cream containers, or other plastic food containers is a great way to get another use out of plastics you would otherwise be disposing of.

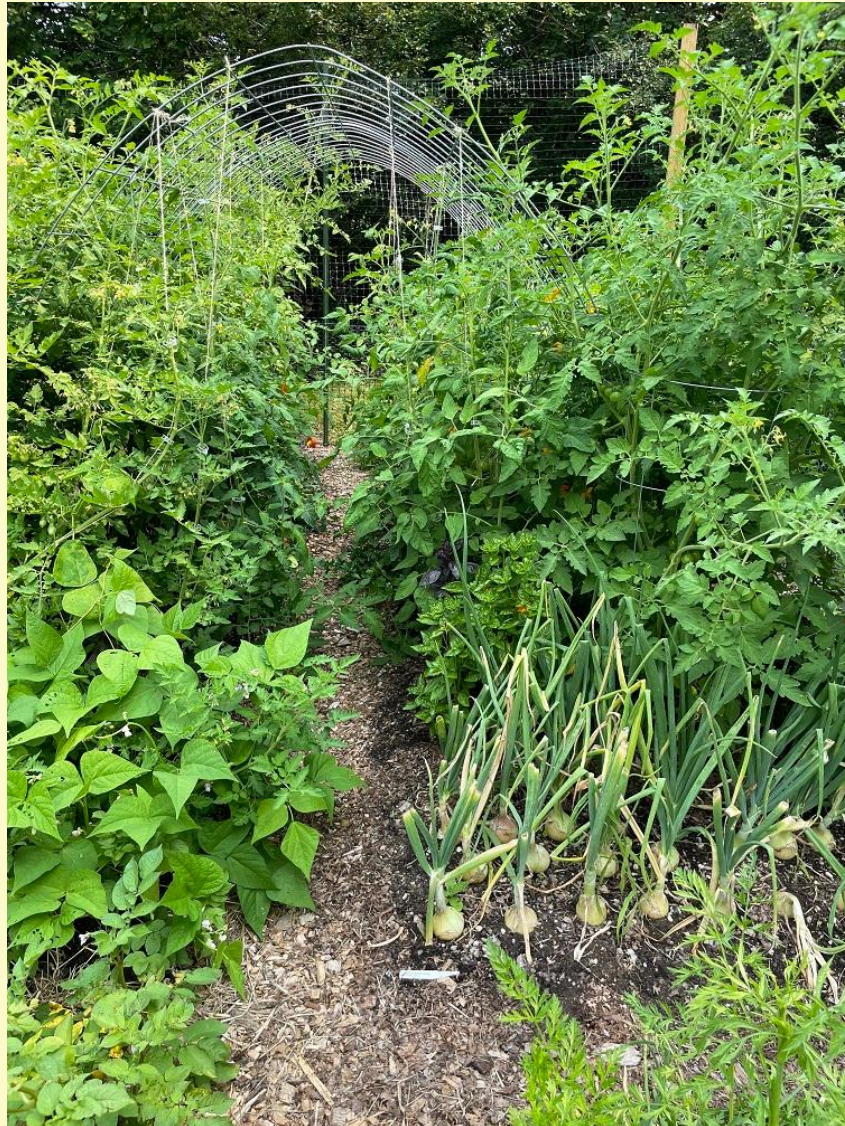
DIRECT SOW SEEDS: Some plants actually do best when they are grown from seed planted directly in the garden. Root vegetables like beets, carrots, turnips, radishes, etc. all do best planted directly in the garden instead of being transplanted. Transplanting creates some root disturbance, which for most above ground plants isn't a big deal—those roots will bounce back and the rest of the plant will keep growing. When the root is the vegetable though you want to avoid root disturbance and damage. Other plants with really tender root systems like corn and beans also do best when they are planted directly in the garden.

PESTS: We like to grow nasturtium (we have found they help with the squash beetles) and marigolds as pest deterrents. I like to put started plants in the garden before we put in our tender seedlings. While both of those have great germination when direct sown, I like to start them ahead of time to get earlier blooms and earlier pest protection.

Seed starting can seem intimidating, but it is very rewarding and you don't have to do all or nothing. We often do a mix of seeds and started plants. Even if you don't have room to start plants indoors, you can always try some seeds planted directly in the garden! It can be very fun to watch the whole growth cycle of a plant from seed! For more seed starting information, Kirk wrote a seed starting overview you can see on the website [here](#).

Remembering Summer at Wines

With her application this year, returning Wines gardener Laura G. sent us some great pictures of her garden and harvest from last year. A great reminder that spring will return!



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.

Winter Classes Through Rec and Ed

Project Grow will be offering one more class 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.

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!](#)

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.

You can't register for these classes yet, but when they are available we will publish links on our website and in the April newsletter.

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

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

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

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

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

Free Zoom Class on Potatoes

Project Grow is pleased to announce a free Zoom session with Greg Steere who works with the MSU Potato Breeding and Genetics Program in the Department of Plant, Soil and Microbial Sciences at Michigan State University. The session is scheduled for Thursday March 17, 2022, at 7:00 PM. Greg will discuss his work in the following areas:

1. Brief survey of Michigan's potato industry.
2. Use of conventional breeding techniques for varietal selection and development of improved breeding methods for the purposes of producing superior potato varieties for Michigan.
3. Best practices for potato gardening – conventional potato seed piece, and true potato seed.
4. Common pests of Michigan (Midwest Potato) and effective control.
5. Exciting horizons in potato breeding – Potato 2.0 (Diploid Breeding).
6. Possibilities for the future incorporating gene editing techniques.

If you are interested in attending this class, please submit your contact information [here](#) and we will send you the Zoom link a couple days before the class.

Project Grow Gardens Around Town

- Wines after the snow
- Clague in late February
- Food Gatherers

- County Farm Discovery
- County Farm Section B



