

January 2021

# Garden Notes

## News from the Yard and Garden

### Recipe of the Month

#### Winter Black Bean Soup

##### Ingredients

- 3 cups black beans, cooked
- 2 teaspoons vegetable oil
- 1/2 cup onion, chopped (about 1/2 medium onion)
- 1 tablespoon chili powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin (optional)
- 1 can (14.5 ounces) Mexican style diced tomatoes
- 1 cup water
- 1 tablespoon lime or lemon juice (optional)
- Nonfat yogurt or low fat sour cream and cilantro for garnish (optional)



##### Instructions

1. Prepare beans as directed.
2. Heat oil in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add onion and cook. Stir until onion begins to soften (about 2 to 3 minutes). Add chili powder. Add cumin, if desired. Cook and stir for 1 minute.
3. Add tomatoes, beans, and water. Bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 10 minutes (covered).
4. Remove from heat and stir in lime or lemon juice, if desired.
5. Garnish before serving.

For tips and nutrition facts, see <https://spendsmart.extension.iastate.edu/recipe/winter-black-bean-soup/>

### Spring Garden Seminars

Though we won't be able to gather in person, Master Gardeners from several counties in Western Wisconsin have been hard at work to transitioned several annual garden seminars to one grand virtual event that begins mid-Feb.

Registration is now open for the Growing Together 2021 Western Wisconsin Spring Garden Seminar. To learn more and to register, visit [www.eauclaireareamastergardener.org/](http://www.eauclaireareamastergardener.org/)

A poster for the Growing Together 2021 Western Wisconsin Spring Garden Seminar. It features a collage of garden photos and lists the following presentations:

- February 20, 2021 Sonya Burke: Soil Preparation for Planting Vegetables
- February 27, 2021 Melinda Myers: Creating a Private Space
- March 6, 2021 Laura Jull: Planting Trees and Shrubs
- March 13, 2021 Kelly Povo & Phyllis Root: Searching for Wildflowers in Wisconsin and Minnesota

The cost is \$10, which covers all four presentations. The seminar will be presented via YouTube Live. Attendees will receive the link the week prior to each presentation. All presentations are open to the public and welcome both new and experienced gardeners. Registration is at [www.eauclaireareamastergardener.org/](http://www.eauclaireareamastergardener.org/). The seminar is brought to you by Western Wisconsin Master Gardener Associations from the following counties: Barron, Chippewa, Dunn, Eau Claire, Pierce and St. Croix.

### Tips on how we can reuse or recycle some of our holiday items once the season is over

Donate any gently used decorations that you don't need anymore to Goodwill or the Salvation Army. For items not suitable to donate, recycle what pieces you can to reduce what goes into the garbage. Hold on to any strings of broken Christmas tree lights as often certain stores will offer an opportunity to recycle them before next Christmas. Many participating stores will include a discount toward purchasing new lights if you bring in a string of old ones.

When it comes to Christmas cards, those made of plain paper can be recycled. However, as many of the cards we receive have beautiful artwork, you might want to repurpose them into new decorations, or create festive bookmarks, gift tags or postcards. One clever idea to reuse cheerful-looking wrapping paper is to cover cardboard boxes and use them for decorative storage boxes. Ribbons and bows received on packages can easily be reused on future gifts. You can also check with schools or daycares to see if they would like them for their arts and crafts projects. Once we put our mind to it, we can probably come up with a lot of ways to reuse many of our holiday items.

# January

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Click underlined links for more information on topic...					1 <b>Welcome to 2021</b>	2
3	4 Spend some time this month to inventory, sharpen and clean gardening tools, if needed	5	6 <u>If needed, you can prune oak trees in winter</u>	7	8 	9 Treat yourself to a new trowel or pair of gardening gloves
10	11 <u>Caring for your amaryllis</u>	12	13 	14	15 <u>Check woody plants for chew marks or other damage</u>	16
17	18 Martin Luther King Jr. Day	19 Randomly pick a new plant variety to try while browsing through seed catalogs	20	21 Put out suet for woodpeckers, chickadees and white breasted nuthatches	22	23 
24	25 	26 Visit a botanical garden for a taste of the tropics	27	28 Take a walk around the neighborhood & see what yards have nice winter interest for ideas	29	30 If you had lawn issues last year, - we have resources to help you at Extension
31	1 <b>Welcome to February</b>	2 Groundhog Day	3 	4 Go ice skating!	5	6 <u>Winter care of houseplants</u>



# Master Gardener Updates

## *News and Notes*

- **Reporting hours and annual enrollment**

As many of you have noticed, as of noon on December 31, 2020, the Online Reporting System (ORS) no longer allows volunteers to enter hours for 2020. If you still have hours to report from 2020, contact me.

To begin entering hours for 2021, go to <https://mastergardener.extension.wisc.edu/report-your-hours/>. Look for the green box to access the ORS. Once in the ORS, you will be prompted to complete your annual enrollment.



Report Your Hours / Annual Enrollment

As you will remember, last year we implemented a new enrollment policy. All volunteers need to annually agree to the conditions of volunteer service and volunteer behavior expectations.

**Enrollment needs to be completed before you can resume volunteering in 2021** and begin to input hours. You will need to enroll even if you are taking an exemption for the year. The enrollment period is from January 1 through March 31. You will have limited access to your account until the enrollment process is completed. Contact me with any questions.

- **Staying in the Loop**

You can visit the WI Master Gardener website (<https://mastergardener.extension.wisc.edu/>) to read about the Master Gardener Program's strategic planning, program updates and updates regarding COVID-19. Also, be sure to read the monthly Volunteer Vibe newsletter emailed from the Master Gardener state office. Look for it near the end of each month for the most recent Master Gardener Program news. I will also provide updates as available.

- **Plant Disease Diagnostic Clinic (PDDC) Updates and Policy Changes for 2021**

Look for monthly web articles on the clinic website (<https://pddc.wisc.edu>) as well as new, shorter "Plant Disease Pointers". These pointers will also be available on the UW-Madison Division of Extension horticulture website (<https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/>). The current post discusses highlights of 2020 at the PDDC.

Also, starting this year, the PDDC now requires clients to first submit photos of their plants using the PDDC online submission form (<https://pddc.wisc.edu/digital-diagnosis/>). Whenever possible, the clinic will provide a disease diagnosis based on the photos. If an accurate diagnosis is not possible, the clinic will then request a follow-up physical sample.

There is a \$20 fee for the digital submissions. If a follow-up physical sample is needed, this digital fee will be credited to any fees charged for processing the physical sample. Here is a link to the PDDC's services and fees for 2021: <https://pddc.wisc.edu/services-fees/>.





# in the yard and garden

## Start an easy indoor herb garden with basil

I always enjoy reading about the folklore that surrounds a plant. Herbs, in particular, are usually rich in lore and basil is no exception. This is an herb you'll want to have if you are ever bitten by the basilisk, a fabled, fire-breathing dragon. Roman legend claims that basil is an antidote to the dragon's venomous bite. Not surprisingly, the lore associated with basil has changed over time. In later years, it became a symbol of love. The saying goes that a man who gives a woman a sprig of basil will have her fall in love with him and that she will never leave him.

The term basil is believed to come from the Greek word basilikon, meaning 'royal' or 'king'; hence, the herb's distinction of being called the 'king of herbs'. Given its lovely fragrance and surplus of uses, I'd say it was aptly named. It is one of the most popular herbs grown by the home gardener.

In the vegetable garden, basil has long been recommended as a good companion for tomatoes and peppers. It is believed to enrich both their growth and taste. Though this has not been scientifically proven, I often sow some basil seeds in with my potted tomato plants. I confess, I do this more as a space saving technique but I do usually love the taste of my tomatoes.

Most people know this herb for its culinary uses. Commonly found in Italian, Mediterranean, Thai, and Asian cuisine, basil can be added to so many dishes the list seems unending. There are recipes for stews, soups, meat dishes, fish dishes, egg dishes, vegetable dishes, sauces, and even fresh fruit desserts that call for basil to spice them up. It can be used dried or fresh.

This versatile herb is easy to grow. Most often it is grown by direct seeding into the garden but basil will also grow well in a pot. Just sow it outside after the threat of frost has passed.

While growing indoors, make sure the plant receives plenty of light. Frequent trimming will encourage new growth and keep the plant bushy. Keep in mind though that, as an annual, the plant will eventually flower and die so keep a packet of seeds handy for planting more outdoors in the spring.



# Upcoming Events & Educational Opportunities

- January 18. **Bluebird Happiness** Zoom presentation by Larry Liegel and Rita Gundry. For more information visit the Eau Claire Master Gardener website <https://www.eauclaireareamastergardener.org/education>. Please *do not* share the Zoom link! Zoom link <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83433183449?pwd=MmV6aEJZM0Z1ZlVoR3RvQVZFUDNpQT09> Meeting ID: 834 3318 3449; Passcode: 059350.
- Beginning January 19 & monthly through March 9 the Illinois Extension is offering three 1-hour webinars as part of their **Four Seasons Gardening webinar series**. The winter presentations include fruit tree pruning, the therapeutic benefits of nature and the therapeutic benefits of gardening. The webinars start at 1:30 p.m. and are free but registration is required. For more information, visit <https://extension.illinois.edu/global/four-seasons-gardening-webinar-series>.
- January 30 **Garden Visions 2021** a half day virtual event of garden talks. Visit <https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/marathonmg/2020/11/30/garden-visions/> for more information and to register. Fee: \$5.
- February 12-13 **The Gardens Network 2021 Virtual Wisconsin Community Garden Conference**. For more information and to register, visit <https://danegardens.net/conference/>. Fee starts at \$5.
- Beginning February 20 & weekly through March 16 **Growing Together 2021 Western Wisconsin Spring Garden Seminar**. Topics include soil preparation for vegetable gardening, design strategies for privacy in the backyard, how to plant trees and shrubs and searching for wildflowers in Wisconsin & Minnesota. Visit [www.eauclaireareamastergardener.org/](http://www.eauclaireareamastergardener.org/) for more information and to register. Fee: \$10 for all 4 presentations.
- February 20-21 **PBS Wisconsin Garden & Landscape Expo**. For more information and to register, visit <https://wigardenexpo.com/>.
- For more events check out the Master Gardener events calendar at <https://mastergardener.extension.wisc.edu/events/>.

## odds and ends

- Big bumblebees learn locations of best flowers—read more at <https://www.morningagclips.com/big-bumblebees-learn-locations-of-best-flowers/>.
- They need to chill: Tips for turning seeds into trees—read more at <https://www.morningagclips.com/they-need-to-chill-tips-for-turning-seeds-into-trees/>.
- **Winter Activity** - as you are out and about this winter, keep an eye out for invasives using this Winter Weed ID from Wisconsin First Detector Network: <https://chippewa.extension.wisc.edu/files/2020/12/Winter-Weed-ID.pdf>.
- Eau Claire County Land Conservation Division **Tree & Shrub Sale** ends January 31. Visit <https://www.co.eau-claire.wi.us/our-government/departments-and-facilities/department-directory/planning-and-development/land-conservation-division/tree-shrub-sale> for more information and to look at order forms.
- **Something completely different** but important — **In the Garden** a free, virtual one-act play on memory loss February 23 at 6:00 p.m. Visit <https://garden-eauclaire-022321.eventbrite.com> to register.

## Quick Links

- [Wisconsin Master Gardener](#)
- [MG Hours Online](#)
- [Plant Disease Diagnostic Clinic](#)
- [Insect Diagnostic Lab](#)
- [WI Horticulture Division of Extension](#)
- [WI Horticulture — Extension Facebook page](#)

**For questions, comments or to contribute an article or photo**

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