



TWINTOWNS GARDENERS' MARKET

WAHPETON, ND / BRECKENRIDGE, MN

Gardening in the Winter

This is the time of year that serious gardeners begin planning their gardens by reading seed and gardening catalogs. They should be showing up in mail boxes any day now.

For those who like to start their plants from seeds, Stephanie Blazek agreed to share her favorite seed sources with us:

Johnny's Selected Seeds:

www.johnnyseeds.com I now order most of my seeds from here. They have their own YouTube channel, and on their website you can watch different gardening techniques. They have some great gardening tools and I have purchased seed starting materials, string for tying up tomatoes, a cucumber/pea trellis, clips for tomatoes, and other things for growing plants vertically. I am impressed with their large variety of seeds. I even purchased strawberry plants and horseradish from them and they were healthy and did quite well.

Seed Savers Exchange:

www.seedsavers.org I ordered early tomato plants from Seed Savers, Totally Tomatoes (www.totallytomato.com) and Burpee Seeds (www.burpee.com) and these were by far the most superior in quality and health. I like that you can pick your delivery week so I was able to get some nice looking plants in March.

Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds:

www.rareseeds.com They have a beautiful catalog and a wide selection of varieties. Before I found Johnny's Seeds, I ordered mostly from here. Their seeds are non-GMO which is important to me.

Burpee Seeds:

www.burpee.com I do like this site as they carry a variety of heirloom seeds and plants. I like their descriptions and have never been disappointed when I've ordered plants or seeds from them.



This picture of sundogs was taken at sunrise by Emmy Tolbert. She says, "I wasn't really even looking at the screen on my camera because the sun had such a blinding effect. I'm so glad the picture turned out so well."

Gurney's Seed and Nursery:

www.gurneys.com I have ordered from Gurney's in the past and like certain varieties they carry. But with the discovery of the above places, I only place a small order with them now.

Gardening Information:

NDSU Extension Service publishes a nice on-line magazine called Dakota Gardener: <http://www.dakotagardener.com/> The articles are also archived so you can read past articles.

The Richland County Extension web page has great information on lawn and gardening topics. (www.ag.ndsu.edu/richlandcountyextension/horticulture).

Just for fun:

Earth at Night 2012: Scientists are using new images of Earth's dark side to gain insight on human activity and poorly understood natural events. <http://earthobservatory.nasa.gov/Features/NightLights/>

January 2013

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We're on the Web!

www.twintownsmarket.org



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Funding Available for Seasonal High Tunnels

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will help growers to establish high tunnels—also known as hoop houses—to increase the availability of locally grown produce in a conservation-friendly way.

A seasonal high tunnel is a greenhouse-like structure, at least six feet in height, which modifies the climate inside to create more favorable growing conditions for vegetables and other specialty crops grown in the natural soil beneath it. Participating growers can receive funding for a high tunnel up to 2,178 square feet.

NRCS provides financial assistance for the project through the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the EQIP Organic Initiative program. Minimum eligibility requirements must be met to be eligible for funding. EQIP is a competitive program and applications will go through a ranking process. The highest scored applications will receive funding until funds are exhausted.

Growers must apply at their local NRCS office by January 18, 2013 to be considered for the first round of funding selections. There are later sign up dates as well (February 15, 2013; March 15, 2013; and April 19, 2013) but you are encouraged apply early to increase your chance to be funded.

Even if this program isn't right for you, there are many other programs available. Several conservation programs dealing with livestock operations, organic operations, and other conservation practices are available.

Local growers who would like to sign up for the high tunnel pilot should call or visit the NRCS office at a local USDA service center. The Breckenridge Service Center is located at 1150 Highway 75 North, Breckenridge, MN 56520. (218) 643-1536. This is a national program so Richland County growers may apply at the Breckenridge office. You may also check with the Wahpeton office.

At the Breckenridge office contact Marissa Moxness, Soil Conservation Technician, (marissa.moxness@mn.usda.gov) or Yara Gonzalez, District Conservationist (yara.gonzalez@mn.usda.gov).

For more information on the 2013 EQIP Seasonal High Tunnel Initiative, please visit the following site: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detailfull/national/programs/?&cid=stelprdb1046250>

For more information about the 2013 EQIP Organic Initiative, please visit the following site: http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/programs/financial/eqip/?cid=nrcs143_008224

Frequently Asked Questions

Are seasonal high tunnels the same as greenhouses?

No. Seasonal high tunnel systems unlike greenhouses do not necessarily have electrical, heating, or mechanical ventilation systems. The seasonal high tunnel system depends on



the plastic covering to raise temperatures within the structure. Temperatures during the growing season are controlled by using manual roll-up side vents and by opening end doors to provide ventilation. Unlike greenhouses, seasonal high tunnel systems as indicated by their name are seasonal and are considered temporary structures.

What are the structure requirements for a seasonal high tunnel system under EQIP?

Under EQIP the seasonal high tunnel system must be obtained as a pre-fabricated kit directly from the manufacturer or from a supplier. The frame shall be constructed of metal, wood, or durable plastic and be at least six feet in height. The plastic cover must be, at a minimum, a 6-mil greenhouse grade, UV resistant polyethylene. Individuals must work closely with their manufacturer or supplier to plan, design, and construct the structure in accordance with the manufacturer's specific recommendations.

What are my obligations if my application is funded?

You would order and install your seasonal high tunnel and submit copies of your expenses. Records and reports of crop data such as yield amounts, fertilizer and pesticide use, and growing days must be submitted for four years. You would also be required to record and report maintenance costs for the high tunnel for four years.

Do you have contacts that could or should be used to get the best prices for high tunnels?

The NRCS doesn't recommend one company over another. Two manufacturers that sell seasonal high tunnels are Growers Supply (<http://www.growersupply.com>) and Poly Tex Greenhouse and Display Systems (<http://www.poly-tex.com/about.html>). You could Google *Seasonal High Tunnel Manufacturers* for more manufacturers.

Based on past experience, seasonal high tunnels wider than 26 feet are not recommended. The wider ones are more prone to blowing down or collapsing under snow loads.

Do you have any examples of people around this area who have made this type of operation a profitable venture?

We would recommend that you research the local farmers market, local restaurants, and local grocery stores that may be looking to buy produce. Most people who have participated in the program have been very happy with the results. All have seen increased yields and extended seasons for growing, which in the business of selling produce, means higher profits!

Workshops

Northern Plains Sustainable Ag Conference "Sustainability for the Future"

January 24-26, 2013
Best Western Ramkota Hotel, Aberdeen, SD
Registration discounts available
Contact Jan Tolbert @ 218-43-6029

Conference Keynote Speakers:

Matt Dillon, Organic Seed Alliance and
Dr. Richard Olree, Emineral

Room Rates are \$84.99 + tax.
Call 605-229-4040 to reserve early

Check it out at <http://npsas.org/>

Community Emergency Response Team

Mondays, February 4 through March 4, 2013
Wahpeton City Hall
6:00-9:30 p.m.

Sessions include Disaster Preparedness, Fire Safety, Disaster Medical Operations, Light Search and Rescue, CERT Organization, Disaster Psychology, Terrorism and CERT, and Course Review and Disaster Simulation.

This course is free and open to anyone age 18 or over, however preregistration is required. To register contact Penny Seifert at pennyann@wah.midco.net.

High Tunnel Workshop for Home Gardeners and Commercial Growers

Thursday, March 7, 2013
Casselton, ND
8:30 am-5:00pm
Admission: \$25.00 by March 1, \$35.00 at the door
Lunch included

Brochure and registration form available at:
www.twintownsmarket.org/pdf/2013/GardenWorkshop2013.pdf

Spring Gardening Workshop and Salad Supper

Thursday, April 11, 2013
Breckenridge Elementary School Cafeteria
5:15 pm: Registration and salad supper
6-9:00 pm: Mini-workshops
Admission: \$15 by April 1, \$20 after April 1

Join beginner and experienced garden enthusiasts for mini-workshops featuring a variety of gardening topics.

Register online at www.breckenridge.k12.mn.us. Follow Web Store/Community Education link to choose classes for MasterCard, Visa or Discover payment.

Send Us Your Photos

By Emmy Tolbert



My kitten, Fireball,
taking a nap



This is a black and yellow Argiope, also known as a garden spider. It was in our garden, as these spiders tend to be around tall plants and flowers. They can spin webs up to 2 feet wide, plus they weave their web in a vertical zigzagged way, probably to keep birds from flying through it!!!! Garden Spiders eat prey such as flies, grasshoppers, crickets, bees, and other garden insects. They are very active during the day hours. If threatened they will drop off their web and try to hide on the ground under leaves and vines.