Going Local North Dakota

Local News

A North Dakota Department of Agriculture Initiative - Agriculture Commissioner Doug Goehring

June 5, 2009

Volume 2, No. 6

How does your garden grow?

Kylie Weiland, 6, fetching water for her family's community garden plot at Dacotah Centennial Park in Mandan.

See more community garden photos in this month's newsletter.

Updates on local foods projects in North Dakota communities

Localmotion

Dale Hildebrant tills the garden.

Valley City community garden underway

Valley City relocates farmers market after spring flooding

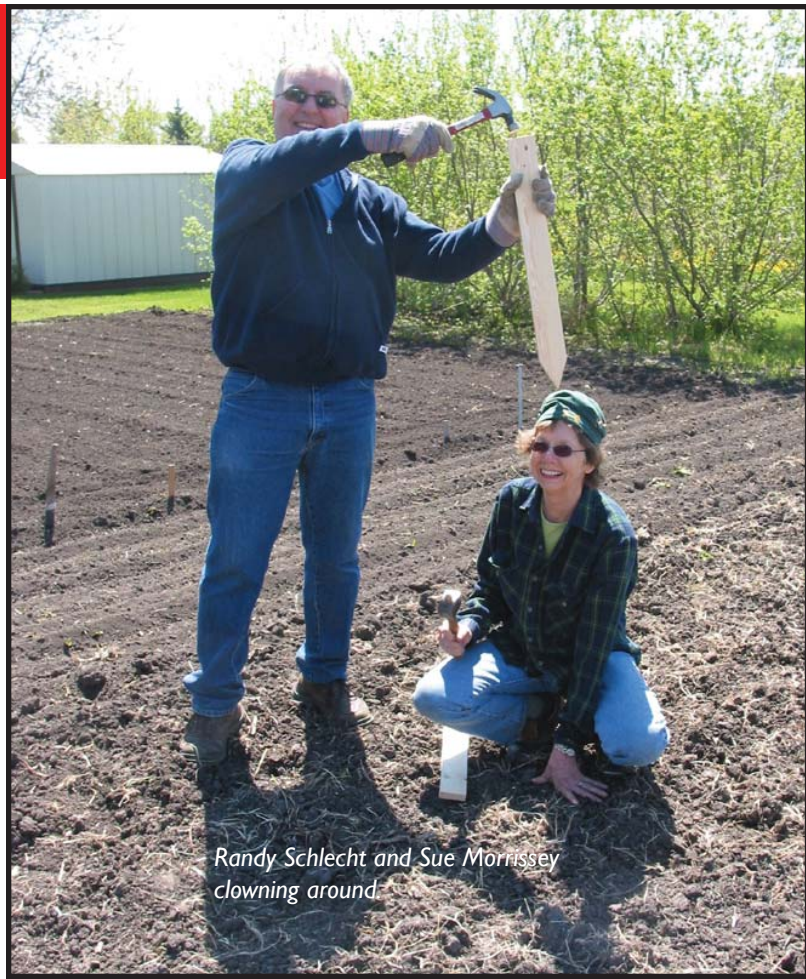
Valley City residents have moved their farmer market site due to early spring flooding in the Sheyenne River Valley.

Dale Hildebrant, Carol and Terry Kiser plotting the newly tilled spots.

The market is expected to be open Saturday, June 6, at the Hinchberger Park, 2nd Street NE, north of Main Street RV

The Monday/Thursday market will open Monday, July 6 in the Pamida parking lot at 100 West Main.

These photos show Valley City residents working and clowing around in their community garden plots. The idea for a community garden was the result of information presented at the local foods meeting held in October.



Randy Schlecht and Sue Morrissey clowning around.

Youth 'Gather at the Garden'

Grant County local foods initiatives continue growing

Grant County youth have been involved in planting the youth/food pantry portions of the community gardens in Carson, Elgin and New Leipzig.

On May 20, the Roosevelt Elementary School second-grade students in Carson planted in the Carson Community Garden, located on the property of Glenn and Ina Udell, who donated their land for use.

On May 21, the Elgin-New Leipzig Elementary School third-graders in Elgin planted the Elgin Community Garden's youth/food pantry plot on school property.

During the summer's first "Gather at the Garden" event May 26, youth helped with planting at the New Leipzig Community Garden under the supervision of Roxann Tietz, one of the community's garden volunteers. The New Leipzig Community Garden is located on the property of Joyce Stern, who donated her land for use.

Red lettuce, yard-long beans, and even peanuts, will soon be sprouting from the sites!

The community gardens are a joint project of the Grant County Extension Service and the Grant County Job Development Authority.

Summer events for the youth will be planned at all three community garden sites. A volunteer in each community will lead those lessons with local youth.

Third-graders from Elgin-New Leipzig Elementary School dig in at the youth plot at the Elgin Community Garden. The pupils were involved in planting at all three sites in Carson, Elgin and New Leipzig.

Community supported agriculture shares available at Beach

Ron and Sarah Volk, Beach, have opened their farm produce to community supported shares this summer.

Members buy a share of the farm and receive a weekly box of fresh, locally-grown, organic vegetables – enough for a family of four.

The Volks decided to plant 12 different vegetables based on a survey by Cheryl Planert. The Planerts will also be the site leaders and the veggies can be picked up weekly at their home in Beach. There's also an opportunity to work in the garden.

There are 25 shares available at $300 each for a 10-week season, give or take depending on Mother Nature. Call Planerts at 701-872-2667 or Volks at 701-872-2172 to purchase a share or for more information about CSAs.

Mandan Community Garden begins again with 30 plots

After 30 years Mandan again has a community garden.

Thirty plots were made available at Dacotah Centennial Park on the Strip, and all but two were rented by the end of May.

The Mandan Park District agreed to a three-year lease for the garden space near the soccer fields. Mike Zerr, park district employee, made sure the land was tilled after Jackie Buckley, NDSU Extension agent, had the grass sprayed.

The city of Mandan supplied a water buffalo (an extra tank) that will be filled by the Mandan Fire Department trucks. Various other donations were made for stakes; a sign was purchased, and the planting commenced.

Here are some photos of new and seasoned gardeners working at the Mandan Community Garden.

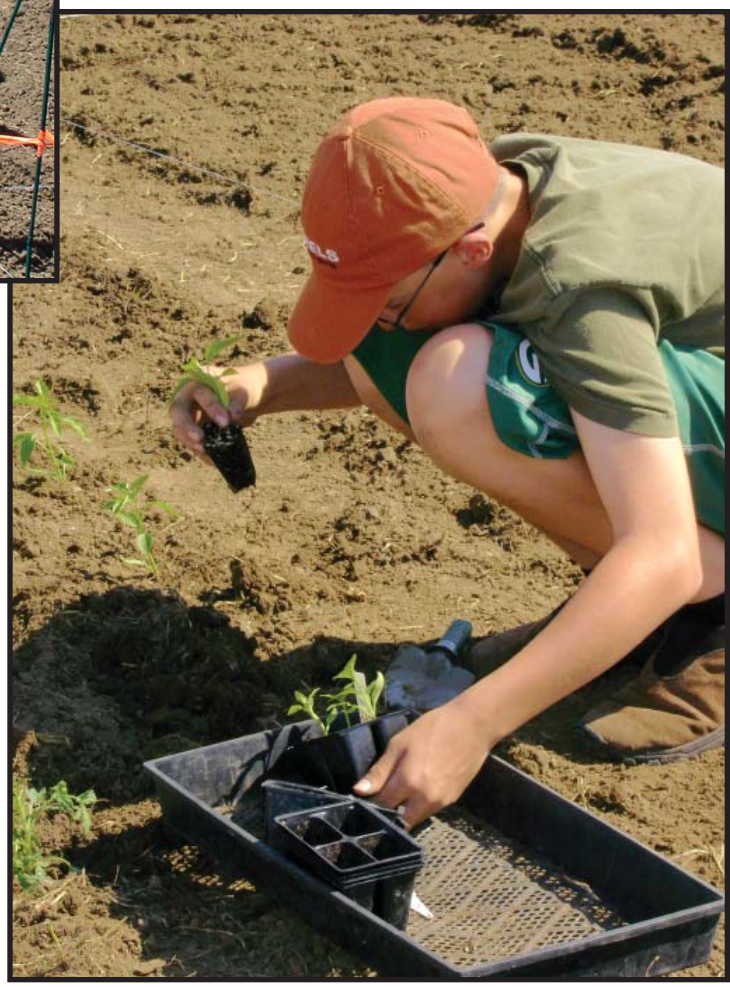
Shayla Bechtel, daughter of Dave and Vonda Bechtel, waters some new plants. Below, her brother, Rylan helping his mom water. Both turned 4 years old on June 2.

Steve Schadler assisted with delineating plots at the garden.

Mandan Community Garden

David Kroll showing his granddaughter, Caroline Senn, how to properly plant a corn seed at the Mandan Community Garden.

Caroline Senn shows her friend, Kyarra Dunn, how to plant a row.



Casey Weiland, 12, was in charge of planting peppers.

Mike Weiland brought his children Casey, 12, and Kylie, 6, to the garden.

Food pantry benefits from internship

Heidi Demars from Grand Forks is completing a summer internship at Red River Valley Community Action. While many programs for low-income individuals and families exist, Demars decided to focus on the Food Fellowship Program.

This program recovers and distributes food to those in need in Grand Forks.

"I was not only interested in bringing in more food to their Food Fellowship program, but fresh, nutritious produce that is typically more expensive and harder to access by those facing food insecurity," Demars said.

A grant from America the Beautiful Fund provided the seeds for Demars to plant a garden that will be entirely donated to the Grafton Food Pantry and its Food Fellowship program.

Because there was no plot to be found in Grand Forks in time to plant, the garden will be behind St. Johns Church in Grafton which also houses the food pantry. Volunteers assist with the tilling and planting. Demars hopes to develop a program similar in Grand Forks when land becomes available.

Call Demars at heididemars@hotmail.com or by phone at 218-791-6111.

Minot local foods supporters plan meeting in June

The Minot Local Foods group had its first planning meeting in May and did some brainstorming for a vision of local foods in the area.

In addition to researching a few long-term projects, the group members are forging ahead with awareness and education opportunities.

Booth space has been reserved at the Verendrye Electric and Souris River Telephone's annual meetings later this month. Plans for two community education classes on blanching and freezing fresh vegetables and making spaghetti sauce from fresh ingredients, are in the works for late August.

The next meeting will be held at 7 p.m. Tuesday, June 16, at the North Central Research Extension Center.

For more information contact Elizabeth Eckert, PhD, Wellness Coach and organice gardener at 701-839-4755.

Is your community planning a local foods meeting or event?

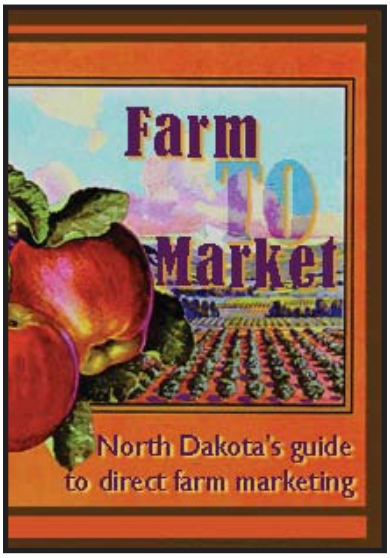
Send your information to
suebalcom@nd.gov
or visit our networking site at
http://goinglocalnd.ning.com/
Add your information by clicking on "add events."

Handbook available

"Need to know" information for anyone participating in local farmers markets

The 2009 Farm to Market guide for direct farm marketing is now available from the North Dakota Department of Agriculture.

The 36-page booklet is an invaluable source for anyone with questions about what can be sold at their local farmer markets.



Information in this booklet ranges from how to obtain a sales tax permit to individual health district food safety regulations.

Included in each section are contact names and phone numbers for state agencies in the event more information is needed.

It will be available free of charge from the department and also will be posted online at www.agdepartment.com.

Call 701-328-2231 or 800-242-7535 to reserve a copy today.

Fargo local foods initiatives grow in several gardens

After the floods, Fargo Moorhead community gardening projects take off

Olivet Lutheran, First United Methodist churches and the Cass Clay Healthy People Initiative (CCHPI) have created the Olivet-First United Methodist Community Garden at 3910 25th St. S. in Fargo.

Members from both congregations and 12 refugee families will garden together in the 10,000-square foot vegetable garden beginning this summer. A planting celebration was held on May 30 with a meal and blessing.

After four years of gardening with refugee families at its Crossroads location at the corner of 25th St. and 17th Ave. S. in Fargo, the Olivet group discovered they could be displaced in 2009 because of a building project at that site. Garden leaders Nola Storm and Jack Wood began searching for alternative sites. A community garden organizational meeting hosted by CCHPI in February connected the Olivet leaders with members of First United Methodist which resulted in the formation of the new refugee garden.

As a result of the organizational efforts of CCHPI, three other vegetable gardens will be established in 2009, totaling more than ¾-acre. The YMCA will add a 1,300 square foot garden at its Schlossman location to be used in its preschool program. The garden start-up was supported by funding from the State Bank and Trust "Pay it Forward" program.

Catalyst Medical Center is adding a half-acre vegetable garden on-site for its staff and neighboring apartment residents. Its purpose is to provide healthy food and fun activity that enhances community. Extra produce will be donated to neighbors.

TNT Kid's Fitness will be establishing a 640 square foot vegetable garden as part of its "No Bummer Summer" youth fitness program. Gardening activities will support exercise and volunteer service goals. Plans are to donate to a local shelter and to sell produce to sustain the garden.

The former Olivet garden will be used to plant low maintenance crops such as corn, squash and pumpkins because no utilities are available at this property. Mother Nature has been asked to provide timely rains.

In the garden, (l-r) are Zeinab Saed, Katy Christianson, Maryan Oradnik holding Nadir Saed, (on the ground) Patrick Smith, Marth Smith, Calvin Smith, Trevor Christianson, and Phoebe. The Saed family comes from North Sudan and the Smilth family comes from Liberia, Phoebe, Rwanda.

This location could potentially become a community garden next summer.

The produce of this garden will be shared with those who help and also any excess with the food banks.

CCHPI is a community-wide active living and healthy eating initiative funded by Dakota Medical Foundation. It serves as an umbrella group to coordinate many efforts underway to improve our food and physical activity culture and to develop intentional efforts to create new opportunities for healthy change.

For more information contact:
Rory Beil,
Director Cass Clay Healthy People Initiative
Dakota Medical Foundation
(701) 893-6366
rorybeil@dakmed.org
www.healthycc.org

More worker bees, (l-r) Nola Storm, Rory Beil, Martha Smith, Patrick and Calvin Smith, Trevor Christianson - baseball cap and sunglasses, Linda Bates - plaid shirt, Rosaline Swarray - bending over in the yellow shirt, Jack Wood -maroon sweatshirt, Katy Zeinab and Maryan Oradnik.

Fargo celebrates its community garden

Maryan and Gary Oradnik, Nadir and Mona Saed enjoying a picnic lunch.

(l-r) Abir, Zeinab, Mona, Nadir and Adeel Saed.

(back, l-r) Princess, Calvin, Martha Patrick Sr. Akeem and (front, l-r) Partick Jr. Decontee, and Jerry Smith.

Education opportunities

The Farmers Market Coalition is partnering with the Wallace Center at Winrock International to bring growers a series of six on-line webinars, starting June 9. The first of these sessions are geared mainly for leaders in state and regional farmers market organizations, and the last three are more relevant for farmers market managers.

Register early for these free webinars.

- **Strategic Planning in the Real World:** How to Put No Staff, No Money, and Big Dream to Work for Your Organization. June 9, 1 p.m. Eastern. Nicole de Beaufort, 4th Sector Consulting and Karen Wagner, Oregon Farmers' Market Association.
- **Best Board Practices and Meetings that Matter:** An Introduction to Nonprofit Governance. June 23, 1 p.m. Eastern. Roseanne Stead, Tides Center.
- **Sowing Value, Reaping Rewards:** Recruitment, Services, and Administrative Systems for Successful Membership Organizations. July 14, 1 p.m. Eastern. Brian Snyder and Michele Gauger, Pennsylvania Association for Sustainable Agriculture & Jeff Cole, Federation of Massachusetts Farmers Markets.
- **Measuring Success:** Market Record-Keeping and Evaluation. July 23, 1 p.m. Eastern. Chris Curtis, Neighborhood Farmers Market Alliance (Seattle, WA); Bernie Prince, FreshFarm Markets (Washington, DC); Darlene Wolnik, marketumbrella.org (New Orleans, LA)
- **Food Safety First:** GAPs and Food Safety Issues for Farmers Markets. August 18, 1 p.m. Eastern. Betsy Bihn, National GAPs Program Coordinator, Cornell University; Andy Sarjahani, Virginia Tech Sustainability Coordinator; Brigitte Moran, Marin Farmers Markets.
- **EBT and Nutrition Outreach:** Practical Advice from Successful Programs. September 16, 1 p.m. Eastern. Diane Eggert, Farmers' Market Federation of New York; and Mike Hurwitz, New York City Greenmarket Farmers Markets.

Each session will feature opportunities for questions and answers and discussion.

For more information visit www.farmersmarketcoalition.org/ or email info@farmersmarketcoalition.org.

Got bugs, get help

Check out this web site: http://nysipm.cornell.edu/organic_guide/ for some helpful information on growing beans, carrots, squash and peas organically.

Just released from Cornell University Integrated Pest Management program four guides to growing these vegetables can be found at this web site.

The site also has many other resources on preventing insect infestations on your organic produce.

The New York State Integrated Pest Management Program develops sustainable ways to manage pests and helps people to use methods that minimize environmental, health, and economic risks.

Save the Date!

Organic Field Day
University of Minnesota Southwest Research and Outreach Center, Lamberton, MN
Thursday, July 9, 2009 from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm

Field tour stops to include:
- Organic high tunnel
- No-till roller/crimper research
- Soil pit comparing organic and conventionally managed soils
- Variety trials; forage research; weed control plots
- And much more!

Hear presentations on:
- Tricks and Trades for Weed Control
- Farm Business Management
- UMN Organic Research Reports

Watch for more details coming soon!

SW Research & Outreach Center • 23669 130th Street • Lamberton, MN 56152
Phone: 507-752-7372 • http://swroc.cfans.umn.edu

Northern Plains Sustainable Ag Society

Organic Farm Tour

"Switching?" – June 23-24

Held in collaboration with NRCS

Uneasy about the effects of toxic chemicals on crops?
Concerned about depleting the soil and want to improve and preserve it
Wonder why anyone would or could consider switching from conventional/chemical to sustainable/organic farming system?
Explore the answers to these questions and connect with producers and farmers who have switched and experience success

Starting in Bismarck, the tour will visit
Dakota Prairie Organic Flour in Harvey; Blaine's Best Seeds, Rugby; and Lynn Brakke Organic Farms, Moorhead
Red Hawks game in Fargo and more
Thanks to NRCS there is no cost for travel, meals, or motel!

For more information and registration, call 701-883-4304
Or email minpsas@drtel.net – call today, seats are limited.

Local light

God waters weeds too

A personal column
By Sue B. Balcom

Nothing surprises me more than the progress we have made with the Mandan Community Garden.

In two months or less, community-spirited folks have turned an area near the soccer fields into hope.

Hope for a harvest of fresh vegetables ranging from purple kale to popcorn.

It's delightful.

First the grass, then the brown dead grass, then the tilled chunky brown dirt, then the compost, then the tilling and finally the planting.

The plots are as diversified as a patchwork quilt.

Every gardener's style of sowing differs; from straight neat rows following white household string to valleys radiating from a center point and stopping at four red brick stepping stones.

Our water buffalo (that's what my spouse dubbed the large silver tank near the garden) stands above the newly planted rows, hopefully not for long. As Mother Nature provides long days of sunshine, tiny green leaves unfold in respect to their source of life. Soon, the green will overcome the brown lifeless dirt and shiny silver tank and become the focal point of Mandan's little Eden.

It's amazing how many things there are to teach someone who has never gardened before. There's a lot of teaching going on at the Mandan garden, as well as the others around the state, I'm sure. Youngsters assist with watering, dropping seeds and even tucking plants into the soil.

Most of all there's a sense of joy and accomplishment emanating from everyone you meet at the garden. Even with unforeseen success, the gardeners are proud of what they have in a 20x20-foot piece of land, albeit only leased for a short season.

Plans for a garden blessing and an end-of-the-season Stone Soup feed have been sowed and hopefully grow to fruition.

If you aren't involved in gardening, but still wish to witness a miracle, a community garden is the place to go.

None of this could have been accomplished without the support of several entities.

The Mandan Park Board allowed us three years on its property to build up a garden. While I told them we weren't expecting miracles this year, I think we did fairly well in the short time we had before the end of May. Besides, it was too iffy to begin planting any earlier than the end of the month even though Memorial Day was early. You know that only after May 26, the chance of frost drops in Bismarck to less than 10 percent. Here it is June, as I type this article there are freeze warnings in certain areas of the state.

Our water buffalo came from the city of Mandan Public Works Supervisor Jeff Wright.

The water will be provided by the Mandan Fire Department, free of charge.

Mike Zerr, from the park district did the tilling after NDSU Extension Agent Jackie Buckley managed to borrow a plow from a relative and gave the ground a good turning over.

It was a team effort.

In the end it has become one of the most rewarding experiences of my life.

Sunday morning, my husband helped spread some rotted manure around my potato hills. The sun was shining, it was calm, a perfect way to start the day. He did not grow up on a farm, so he's learning about gardening too.

With the growing vegetable plants, friendships will grow, knowledge will grow and memories will be recalled.

As one gardener said, "If my mother were still alive, I could ask her questions. She was a great gardener."

Perhaps the lesson of the garden could be adapted for daily life.

People, like plants, are born helpless and need nurturing, sustenance and plenty of sunshine to thrive.

There comes a time when they really look wonderful and inviting, fresh with new ideas and bright shiny fruit.

As seasons pass, the shininess gives way to shriveling leaves and curved spines and eventually we return from where we came.

What comes next, another season, different seeds, a new crop encouraged by the old to flourish and thrive during its short passing season on earth. Remember, God waters weeds too.

Website launched with info on local growers

"Locavore Network," a website dedicated to sourcing locally grown or produced products has been officially launched.

Dan Sutton, director of Produce Procurement for Albertsons LLC in Boise, Idaho, is the administrator for this site. He has collected grower data nationwide coupled with articles on topics such as gardening, food safety and marketing.

The goals of www.locavorenetwork.com are:

1. To provide an online meeting place for Locavores, local growers, producers, restaurants, wineries and retail stores.

2. To facilitate the search for locally grown and produced product.

3. To provide marketing tips for growers and producers.

Each state has its own harvest calendar and a search engine for fruits and vegetables, meats, dairy, wine and manufactured products. Area farmers markets are also listed.

To facilitate sharing, each state also has an individual page to cultivate its own forum.

Currently there are more than 16,000 local grower profiles on the site. The site requires a login name and password to participate.

If you are interested in participating in these activities please send an e-mail to admin@locavorenetwork.com.

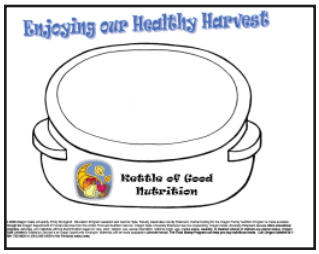
Targeting our youth with healthy harvest lesson plan

Glenda Hyde, Oregon State Extension Service has developed a curriculum for fourth graders called "Enjoying Our Healthy harvest."

The entire program including handouts is available on the website http://extension.oregonstate.edu/deschutes/enjoying-our-healthy-harvest.

While geared towards Oregon products, it could easily be adapted to a North Dakota school program. Classes are geared towards making better food choices, stretching food dollars and handling food safely.

The first lesson focuses on proper hand washing techniques and then moves on to a lesson about one fruit or vegetable a week.



One of the tools developed for the healthy harvest lesson plan by Oregon State Extension Service .

Hands-on learning includes actually choosing fresh fruit and vegetables and preparing them properly.

The curriculum is targeted at students already studying their home-state agriculture.

For more information contact Hyde at Glenda. hyde@oregonstate.edu.

Book to be released in June

Chuck Waibel and Carol Ford, presenters at January's Local Foods Summit in Bismarck, have announced the date for their book called "The Northland Winter Greenhouse Manual: A Unique, Low-Tech Solution to Winter Vegetable Production."

Pre-ordered books will be mailed out as soon as possible after June 20, said Waibel.

The 176-page 7-by-10-inch handbook sells for $18.

To order your copy send a check or money order to:

Chuck Waibel - Garden Goddess Enterprises
405 S. 4th St., Milan, MN 56262
Phone: 320-734-4669

Visit www.gardengoddessnetwork.ning.com to keep in touch with the Garden Goddess network.

Create a concrete bird bath or stepping stone workshop set for Fargo

The Northern Plains Botanic Garden Society will host a class on how to create a birdbath or stepping stone from a rhubarb or hosta leaf from 9 to 10:30 a.m. Saturday, June 13 at the greenhouse, 1201 28th Ave N, Fargo.

Cost is $20 for members and $25 for non-members. Bird baths and stepping stones will be constructed from concrete using bowl imprints of rhubarb and/or hosta leaves.

Registration fees include cost of materials.

Bring latex or rubber gloves. Leaves will be available or you can bring your own.

Limited to 15 individuals. For more information or to register for a workshop, contact Lisa Brown: peacelab@i29.net or 232-3765.