



Snowy garden by Arden Miller

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2024 Seed Exchange



Saturday, February 17, 2024

10 AM to noon

Rudy Gelnett Memorial Library
Selinsgrove
(Details on page 2)

Note to 2023 Gardeners:

If you want to reserve the same plot(s) for 2024, please return your [plot application](#) and check by March 1st.



Seed Exchange Info

Garden News



SEED EXCHANGE
February 17 from 10 AM to noon
Rudy Gelnett Library Selinsgrove

This FREE event will be in the Children's section of the library. There are plenty of seeds to go around, so even if you don't have extra seeds to give away, you will go home with plenty of seeds.

If you do have seeds to share, please bring them early or contact us at escgpa@gmail.com to arrange pick up.

We welcome new gardeners, find out more on 2/17.

Snow Date: February 24 10 AM to noon.



Introducing . . . Our ESCG Facebook group! 🌱

We're thrilled to unveil our new Facebook group where green thumbs and budding gardeners can come together to share experiences, exchange seeds, and cultivate a sense of community. Whether you're a seasoned pro or just starting your gardening journey, this space is for you. Connect with like-minded individuals, learn from each other, and celebrate the joys of gardening at East Snyder Community Garden.

This private group is a centralized hub for our community to connect, share, and learn from one another. It is a great place to share your garden projects, photos, and tips. It's also a great place to go for friendly advice and support from other gardeners.

[Join now!](#) We'll see you there!

Notes from the Garden Manager, Roy Swazey

The solstice has passed. Now that optimism and increasing light hours are accompanying us in our journey toward spring, please send in [garden applications](#) or let us know that you are not renting a plot this year.

There is a root vegetable wash station on the three-section compost bin located on the University Avenue side of Plot 37.

If you, while digging around in plots and mulch, find rocks that you don't want to stay in your plot, please put them in rock buckets with bottom holes and take them to the shed. Some rocks will be disposed of elsewhere, and some rocks will find a use at ESCG. Rocks should not be dumped out in random weeded areas because any given weedy area may be mowed in the future.

If it happens that a gardener drives into the garden and makes ruts, please fill in those ruts. Mulch will work just fine for that. Ruts make mowing difficult.

It is now time to think of how you are setting up for next year. I have loaned out a bunch of fencing pieces and am hoping that those who have benefited from that can help in clearing vegetation out of fence pieces and rolling them up for storage.

Water will be turned on around April 15th.

Check this out! [Rohrer Seeds](#) used two of Arden's garden photos for this article in their seed catalog! Did you recognize Karl & Kathy?

START A

Community Garden!



Ever wondered how to start your own or get involved with your local community garden? Community gardens have been growing in popularity in both rural and urban areas for many years now, and for good reason! With many benefits for both residents and the ecosystem, this simple concept can be life changing within a community.

STEPS TO STARTING A COMMUNITY GARDEN!

1. Find a piece of land or space!
2. Engage your community.
3. Find local support and resources.
4. Prepare and build the site.
5. Establish rules and regulations!
6. Grow and maintain with the help of your community!

BENEFITS OF COMMUNITY GARDENS

- Increases community involvement and interactions!
- Encourages healthier eating habits and provides outdoor exercise for residents.
- Provides a diverse ecosystem for pollinators and wildlife.
- Allows residents to share locally grown produce with others.

Share your produce with a Free/Trade Farmstand!



Native Wildflower Bed →

← Raised Beds





Produce Donation News

By Arden Miller

The grand total for 2023 was 1,378 pounds of fresh produce donated. Fresh produce went to Loaves and Fishes food pantry at St. Paul's UCC, Meals4Seals, Martha's Table, Shepherd's Pie, Kidsgrove food pantry, GraceWorks food pantry at Grace Covenant Church and the YMCA food pantry in Sunbury.

One Gardener's Guidelines for Starting Seeds Indoors

By Jackie Lambert

Every seed can be planted indoors later than indicated, usually without loss of vegetable production.

- 🌱 14 weeks before frost - February 10 – plant onion seeds
- 🌱 12 weeks before frost - February 24 – plant hot pepper seeds
- 🌱 10 weeks before frost - March 9 – plant sweet pepper and tomato seeds
- 🌱 8 weeks before frost - March 23 – plant sweet pepper and tomato seeds
- 🌱 4 weeks before frost - April 20 – plant zinnia seeds

May 20 last frost. (last frost in 2023 was May 17)
At ESCG, 4 of the past 9 years have had frosts after May 10.

Thank you, Volunteers!

By Arden Miller

According to Merriam Webster a volunteer is “a person who voluntarily undertakes or expresses a willingness to undertake a service.” The National Council for Nonprofits points out that volunteers are a tremendous resource and without them many organizations would not be able to function. This is certainly true of East Snyder Community Garden (ESCG).

There are no paid positions at ESCG. The five-member board is comprised of individual gardeners who feel that having a community garden in the area is worth their assistance as volunteers. The garden could not run without a group to make plans, pay bills, and all the myriad of tasks that need to be completed.

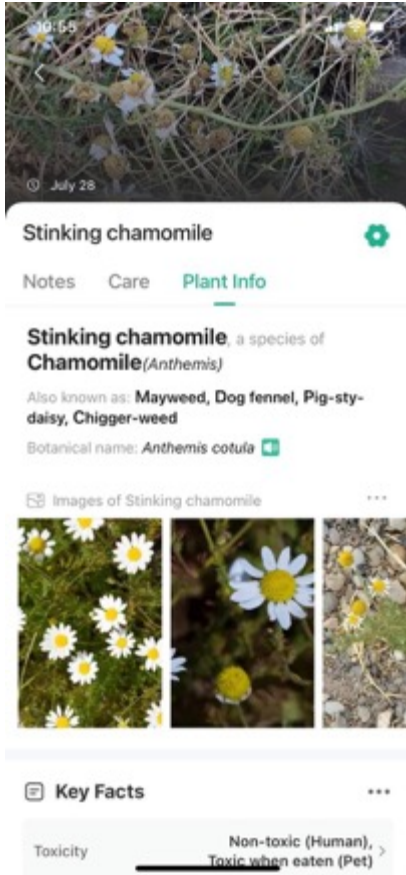
Members of ESCG who are not on the board are also important volunteers. These gardeners help ensure that the grass is mowed, cardboard is brought to the garden (and de-taped), produce is delivered to food pantries and flowers are cut for donation and much more. Garden members helped spread the news of the garden through youth activities at the Farmer's Market and Snyder County Night Out.

In the past year the garden has benefited from a range of volunteers. The list includes SU Serve volunteers who came out in the spring to help, members of the SU Blockchain club who gave up Sunday afternoons in the fall to help weed and move mulch, and freshmen who came to cut zinnia seeds for saving. Girl Scouts helped prepare the zinnia circle in the spring. HOBY youth leaders attending a conference in town spent a day at the garden to accomplish a host of tasks. Members of the REC youth leadership program helped at the garden this fall. Individual high school students and college students also chose to volunteer their time at the garden. East Snyder Community Garden extends a big THANK YOU to all of these folks who had a willingness to undertake service to the garden. We couldn't operate without you.

We welcome help from individuals and groups alike. Please consider helping East Snyder Community Garden serve our community. If you or your organization would like to learn more about volunteering, [click here](#).

Picture This: an accurate and useful plant identification app

By Kirsten Pomerantz



PictureThis has been my primary plant identification tool since May 4, 2021. I subscribed soon after I started to use it, probably because there is a limit on the number of free identifications, and I found it so helpful from the start that I didn't want to be careful about hitting my limit. I have identified just over 1,000 plants and stored nearly 500 plants to date. I use *iNaturalist* for bugs and *Audubon's Merlin Bird ID* for birds, but I continue to use and subscribe to *PictureThis* for plants. It costs \$40 a year to subscribe, but I have found it helpful each year so far and keep renewing. I like this app because of its accuracy, extensive information, and organization of plants. I use this identifier at home, around town, at the nursery, and when traveling.

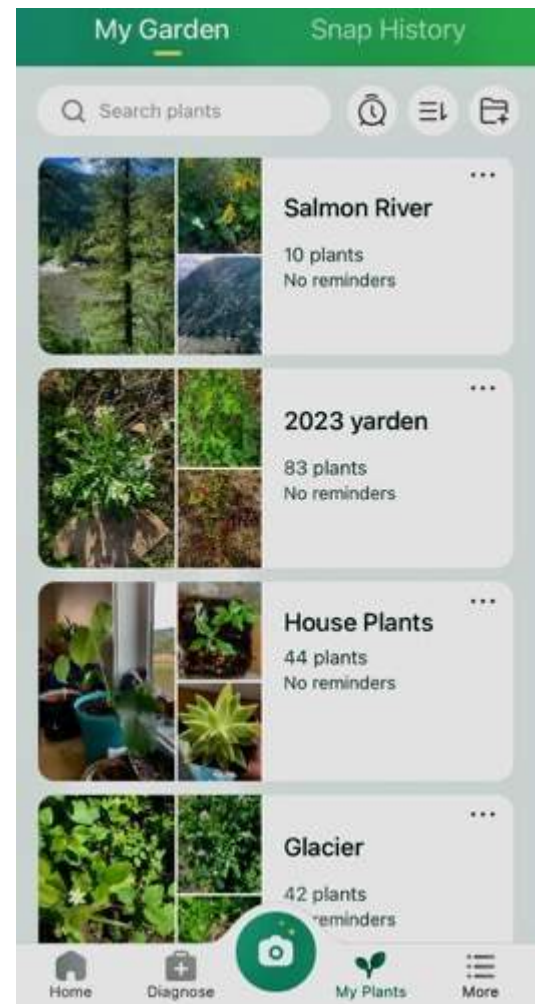
The application claims to be over 98% accurate, and I agree. I like to check accuracy by running the identifier alongside expert humans or other tools. The AI has difficulty with predictably confusing things like first leaves, ambiguous leaves, or poor lighting or focus. The first leaves on any plant are not like the next sets of leaves on a plant, so there is no way anything can make a positive identification without waiting for characteristics that could possibly distinguish a plant. If I am unsure that an identification is correct, I will take similar images multiple times to see if the app makes different identifications. The app does extremely well when there are a few things to distinguish a plant from others.

When traveling, I can capture plants either in the application or as a photo to check later. If I am away from any cellular signal, the application cannot run an identification, but it does maintain a history of plant snaps and will identify it when I am back to civilization.

PictureThis provides a lot of useful and colorful information about the plants. This is most helpful to me when I am trying to understand whether volunteers are native or invasive and whether they are beneficial, cultural, or noxious. It is also helpful when I am bringing in new native plants that I am not yet familiar with. There is always clear information about removal and often notes on the literary or cultural significance of plants, which I find helpful for understanding the natural and sociological significance of plants close to home or continents away.

Aside from identifying plants, the feature that I love best about this application is that I can create and add to folders that I can label. I inventory my yard and garden each year for new growth, I create folders for different places I visit, and I catalog orders or collections from nurseries or other sources. I have many folders now, somewhat freeing up my personal photos from being flooded by random plant images.

Kirsten Pomerantz (a.k.a Roy's daughter) lives in Moscow, Idaho and is learning about the ecology of the Palouse. She is focusing her gardening work on building her new property into a layered canopy of habitat and food for humans and other creatures.



Sharing a new plot and a lesson in soil health

By Jackie Lambert



Ready for planting

In the fall of 2022, I had prepared a new plot by digging out the weeds, adding horse manure, and covering the plot with two layers of my favorite cardboard, Lazy Boy recliner boxes donated by Plaza House Furniture. Yes, Lazy Boy is superior to any other cardboard! I envisioned a fertile, weed free area ready for transplants to guarantee success for any new gardener. I journaled about my progress and shared the first part of my story, “I can clear that plot in a weekend!” in the ESCG 2023 winter newsletter.

For the 2023 growing season I invited a new gardener to share half of the prepared plot with me. I like to keep the weeds well under control and sharing half a plot with a stranger made me nervous. I decided I would help the new gardener weed, not only to help them but also to satisfy my desire for a neat plot.

Oh, nature keeps me humble! The new gardener’s family arrived with tomato and pepper transplants, and I was eager to help. The thick Lazy Boy cardboard had not rotted over the winter, but the family cheerfully cut through the cardboard and planted the tomatoes and peppers.

In time we noticed that the plants were growing slowly compared to tomatoes and peppers we had grown in the past, and the leaves were a lighter green. Slow growth and lighter green leaves can indicate a lack of fertilizer. We used my plot #43 for comparison. We also walked around to see how other plots were doing. Some plots had plants like ours and others had plants that were much larger, greener and had more flower buds. The new gardener used Miracle Gro two or three times. That helped but was not enough. The tomatoes and peppers did not produce as hoped, even with a Miracle Gro boost. They harvested enough peppers and tomatoes to enjoy fresh, but not enough to can or share. The cucumbers and cantaloupe suffered from low soil fertility too. The potatoes did okay.

Without a soil test, I can’t be sure what the problem was. Soil pH can affect the availability of nutrients in the soil. The soil could be more depleted than I originally thought, even with the addition of horse manure in the fall of 2022. The manure could have been applied too early, and the nutrients could have been leached out by rain earlier in the season.



Nutrient deficient peppers photo by Jackie Lambert

When the season ended, the family decided that at this point in their lives, they did not have time to dedicate to gardening. They enjoyed sharing a plot and hope to rent a plot at ESCG sometime in the future. Life changes and we adapt. My life also changed, and I no longer have time for 2 plots. I’m giving up Plot #40.

I believe that Plot 40 needs fertilizer, and I would not “just guess” if I were planning to garden there this coming season. I recommend that whoever rents #40 this spring should have the soil tested. Soil testing is used to determine the fertility of soil as well as the optimum lime and fertilizer requirements for crops. Soil tests are \$10 and are available through Penn State Extension. They are well worth the investment.



Plot #40 after fall cleanup

Read more: <https://agsci.psu.edu/aasl/soil-testing/fertility/soil-fertility-submission-forms>

Floriculture Projects

By Valerie Fry

Thank you to all the gardeners for allowing us [Selinsgrove High School Floriculture class] to visit the garden and to cut flowers and foliage for our Floriculture projects. Students had the choice to frame their pressed flowers, create candles, or to create jewelry and/or keychains. Many chose to complete more than one project. I would love to do this again!

Please enjoy the wide variety of finished project photos.



Photo Gallery



Linda Hickman, her daughter, Ashley, and granddaughter, Laney, prepare their plot for winter with leaves delivered by the borough. Photo by Arden Miller



October blooms photo by Jackie Lambert



Praying mantis photo by Arden Miller

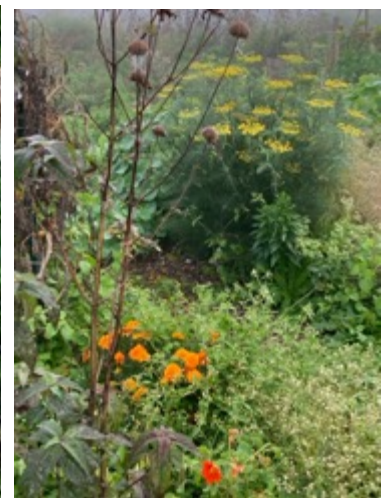


"Bunny Riot" and deer tracks photos by Roy Swazey



Leaf photo by Lori Lupolt

Please share your garden photos. Email them to escgpanews@gmail.com



Milkweed and fall beauty photos by Arden Miller



Kids' Page

Fun with Seeds

During the winter months gardeners prepare for the coming growing season by ordering seeds and planning their gardens. Many gardeners also start their own plants inside, so they are ready to plant when the weather warms. This page offers some kid-friendly seed activities for you to try.

THE LITTLE PLANT (author unknown)



In the heart of a seed,
Buried deep so deep,
A tiny plant
Lay fast asleep.
"Wake," said the sunshine,
"And creep to the light,"
"Wake," said the voice
Of the raindrops bright.
The little plant heard
And it rose to see,
What the wonderful,
Outside world might be.

1) For the youngest future gardeners, **sorting and grouping seeds** together teach children to notice similarities and differences and learn to categorize. Sort seeds into piles by size color, shape, etc.

2) Inquiring minds may enjoy [dissecting a seed](#) to discover what's inside. Learn about the parts of a seed and how it germinates by watching [this short video](#).

3) With the help of a grownup, kids can sprout seeds in a jar, [in a plastic bag](#), or [even on a sponge](#)!



4) For those who enjoy getting their hands dirty, making exploding seeds balls with wildflower seeds may be the perfect seed activity for you! [Learn how here!](#)

When you complete one of these activities, please share pictures, drawings, or stories by sending them to escgpanews@gmail.com



2024 East Snyder Community Garden Board

Back L-R:

Dan Ressler, Vice-President
Jennie Ressler, Treasurer
Roy Swazey, Garden Manager

Front L-R:

Noemi Beachy, Secretary
Crystal Erskine, President



*We invite you to share your wisdom, photos, stories, or creative writing.
Please email newsletter submissions to escgpanews@gmail.com*



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