



## DIGGIN' IT

BY PHAIDRA YUNKER

### Cold comfort

Bundle up, folks - I've officially received my first Diggin' it question! Thanks to Tyler Klosterman for braving the chill and sending me a query. And, wouldn't you know it, he practically answered it himself in the asking:

"Hi, Phaidra! I am a fan of your Diggin' it column. I have a question for you regarding a bricked raised planter as depicted in the attached photo. I have read in many places that it is not recommended to overwinter tulip and crocus plants in them as the fluctuating temperatures and detachment from the geothermal warmth greatly affects the bulbs. I believe that to be true, but I was wondering if you had any tips or tricks on ways to utilize the planter to where one could leave the bulbs in it throughout the seasons as opposed to having to dig up the bulbs every fall and winter them elsewhere? Interested in your thoughts on this. Tyler"

Well, Tyler, you're right on the (frostbit) nose. Gardeners in North Dakota's Zone 4 face a winter challenge: keeping plants alive in raised beds and containers. Elevated beds freeze faster and deeper because they're exposed on all sides. Without the earth's natural insulation, soil temperatures plummet, leaving bulbs vulnerable to damage from repeated freeze-thaw cycles. Wind dries out soil, while rodents burrow under snowpack and feast on bulbs. It's a tough situation for a tulip.

Moisture imbalance adds to the trouble. Raised soil drains quickly, leaving roots too dry, yet snowmelt can oversaturate beds and cause rot. Even large planters lack the protective depth of natural ground. Gardeners try to compensate with mulch, clustering containers together or moving pots

into unheated garages. Some even bury planters for insulation. Still, overwintering success is hit-or-miss. Hardy bulbs like tulips and daffodils sometimes survive, but tender ones such as gladiolus or dahlias won't make it without being lifted and stored indoors.

So what's a gardener to do? Think of it as giving your plants a winter wardrobe. The more layers you provide, the better their odds. Strategies include grouping pots against a house wall, wrapping them in burlap and covering them with leaves or straw. Some gardeners move containers into sheds or garages where temperatures stay cold but stable. Moisture management is key: soil should be slightly damp before freezing to prevent desiccation, but not soggy enough to rot. Barriers like chicken wire laid flat across the top will keep squirrels and mice from turning your bulbs into a buffet.

Tyler, you could try stacking straw bales around the planter for insulation. It's simple and effective, but it does come with drawbacks: critters will move in fast and the setup gets untidy unless you cover it. Don't use plastic. It traps moisture and rots the straw instead of protecting your bulbs. A canvas tarp maybe a good alternative.

Raised beds and containers look sharp, they're convenient (total soil content and moisture control? Yes, please!), and they are absolutely my favorite way to garden. But when winter comes knocking in Zone 4, they don't have the thick lining of the earth's geothermal warmth. They're exposed, vulnerable, and most of the time, downright inhospitable. It's like

DIGGIN' page 8



Tyler Klosterman's narrow brick raised bed poses a winter challenge for bulbs in Zone 4, where fluctuating temperatures and lack of ground insulation leave tulips and crocus vulnerable to freeze-thaw damage. (Submitted Photo | Tyler Klosterman)

# Back in the day

## Underwood

COMPILED BY SHELLY WALLACE  
from the Files of the Central McLean News Journal

### 20 years ago, Dec. 2005

Underwood area residents will again have an opportunity to be Santa's Helpers this year. They can purchase food, donate money or gifts for area families this Christmas.

A Gift Giving Tree with tags specifying items needed for specific ages and sizes is located at Cottingham Insurance in Underwood.

The annual Community Christmas Concert, sponsored by the Underwood Civic Club, will take place Dec. 11 at Vonderheide gymnasium. Just For Kix dancers will entertain the crowd, and after that, Santa will stop in for a visit and treats for the kids. The Harmony Homemakers will serve a soup and sandwich supper following the events.

Amazing - seemed to be the most frequently overheard comments at the Underwood School open house. Visitors were simply amazed by the transformation of the gymnasium and new addition of music room, locker rooms and coaches' offices.

Volleyball players earning special recognition at this year's fall awards ceremony held Nov. 15 were Lisa Nostdahl, Hardest Worker, Co-MVP; Melissa Lawson, Co-MVP, Hustle Award; Brittany Hendrickson, Most Improved; and Cassidy Blotske, Spirit award.

Special recognition was given to this season's outstanding football athletes at the awards ceremony. Football award winners were Daniel Eslinger, Lineman of the Year; Jordan Hughes, Scout Squad MVP; Jake Hultberg, Co MVP, Defensive MVP, Co-Hardest Worker; and Eric Trautman, Co MVP, Offensive MVP and Co Hardest Worker.

### 30 years ago, Dec. 1995

A dinner-dance sponsored by AAL Branch 5001 with the cooperation of the Underwood Fire Department, raised \$2,300 for the Hugh Saylor Medical Trust Account being used for medical expenses for Saylor, who is having his fourth surgery this week.

The Underwood Comet netters started the season 4-0, as well as placing third at the Stanley Invitational. The Comets received some strong serving from Janet Nitschke, Amanda Bicknese and Dani Hemphill. Others mentioned for outstanding contributions by Coach Claudia Benjamin were Annie Anderson, Jessica Kerzman, Shayla Strasser, Tasha McGregor and Cassie Busch.

### 40 years ago, Dec. 1985

George Werre and his hunting party came home from northeastern North Dakota with a cow moose. The cow weighed in after field dressing at 860 pounds, estimated at 1,200 pounds on the hoof. It was cold - official weather reports from Grand Forks said 27 below.

There was plenty of snow, "If you didn't have at least a 30-inch inseam, you'd be stranded," said one of the hunters, but Werre got his once-in-a-lifetime moose.

t's Ambulance Fund is up to \$2,380, according to Fire Chief Fred Eman. The new ambulance is ready to be put in service.

Darla Snyder and Wayne Karlson were leading the Boy and Girl Contest sponsored by Evander's. The public had until Dec. 22 to vote for the winner of the prizes to be given away.

### 65 years ago, Dec. 1960

The ladies of Augustana Lutheran Church will hold their annual Christmas Tea in the church parlor on Dec. 8. All ladies of the community are invited to attend.

The high school carnival grossed about \$1,370, according to Supt. Glen Iverson. In the king and queen contest, Paul Sigurdson and Kathy Roseth were elected the carnival royalty.

Coach Ken Becker's Underwood High School Comets on their first basketball game of the season at Riverdale, edging the Knights 40-32. Calvin Swanson had 18 points for the Comets, John Robinson had 10, and Clements Clark 9 for the Knights.

### 85 years ago, Dec. 1940

Underwood will have a New Year's Eve Carnival Dance at the city hall Dec. 31. The dance is sponsored by the Junior Association of Commerce. The Texaco High-Hats have been engaged to play for the dance.

The Underwood High School basketball teams won two games the past week while losing one. Roland Weisz turned in a very good game against Max from his guard post, scoring 15 points. Dick Spielman turned in a good defensive game, also.

Carl Tauer, who is the commanding officer in a CCC camp at Kramer, visited here over the weekend with his parents and other relatives and friends.

### 92 years ago, Dec. 1933

Gov. William Langer declared an embargo on out-of-state shipments of beef cattle "intended to be processed into human food" and at the same time lifted the wheat embargo for a period of 10 days. The new embargo will continue until lifted by the governor. It is designed to halt shipments out of the state until the market price shall cease to be confiscatory.

It is reported that a "Peeping Polly" has been seen several times recently peeking through various windows around town.

In the rabbit drive held near Falkirk, the hunters were successful in killing 808 rabbits which were sold to A.B. Olson. The entire kill amounted to a trifle more than three tons, and filled a large truck, which was used to transport the load to Minot.

A dance was given Saturday evening at the Zingg home. Elwood Zingg and Eddie Legg furnished the music.

# Central McLean News-Journal

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