



Julie Garden-Robinson Food & Nutrition Specialist

What you plant this spring can support eye health.

Carrots, sweet potatoes and winter squash are rich in carotenoids, and other vegetables may help reduce the risk of macular degeneration.

Our two dogs zipped around the yard, noses to the ground, celebrating the warmer temperatures and nearly snow-free backyard. A pair of cardinals sang loudly from the trees as if they were celebrating, too.

My dachshunds' bellies are fairly close to the ground — a little too close to the snow for their comfort. They usually scamper back into the house as soon as they can.

As I wandered behind my dogs, I thought I saw a glimpse of green living spears. Unfortunately, pine needles from the dogs' explorations under our trees were clinging to their fur and dropping onto the ground.

Then it snowed again the next day, and all our neighbors were outside clearing sidewalks and driveways.

After months of white snow and brownish-gray tree bark, I'm longing to see budding trees and green grass. I want to grow some vegetables and flowers in my backyard and at a community garden.

Soon, we can plant gardens that are feasts for our eyes and the rest of our bodies. Many garden vegetables also provide nutrients that support eye health. Although we may have learned that carrots are good for our eyes, some vegetables are even better.

Carrots, sweet potatoes and



Soon, common garden vegetables can fuel our eyes and the rest of our bodies. (Pixabay photo)

winter squash are rich in carotenoids, which our body converts to vitamin A. These foods nourish your eyes and help them adjust to low light, sometimes called "night blindness."

Other vegetables that grow well in our gardens may help reduce the risk of macular degeneration, a leading cause of vision loss.

The macula, sometimes called the "yellow spot," is a small area in the eye about the size of a capital "O." Despite its size, it plays an important role in clear vision.

The macula contains two pigments — lutein and zeaxanthin — that we obtain from foods. Dark leafy greens such as spinach, kale and romaine are rich sources. Corn, eggs, bell peppers and col-

orful fruits such as tangerines also provide these eye-healthy nutrients.

Enjoy the color of nature and put more nature on your plate. Some eye health supplements are available, but be sure to visit with your health care provider before taking any.

Try growing some eye-healthy foods this summer. Leafy greens sprout quickly, and the seeds can be planted as soon as the soil temperature reaches about 50 degrees Fahrenheit.

I always enjoy growing loose-leaf lettuce because it is ready in 40 to 50 days. See "From Garden to Table: Leafy Greens!" from North Dakota State University Extension to learn more about the

varieties of leafy greens we can grow.

Food can be considered preventive medicine because our bodies need a full range of nutrients to function. The National Eye Institute provides a variety of information about eye health.

• See an eye-care professional routinely. Age-related macular degeneration, cataracts, diabetic retinopathy and glaucoma can be detected through regular eye exams.

• If you smoke, take steps to quit. Stay physically active to reduce risk for diabetes, high blood pressure and other conditions that can affect your eyes.

• Maintain normal blood pressure. • Wear sunglasses and a brimmed hat when you are outside in bright sunshine.

• Wear safety eyewear when you are working around your house or playing sports.

I'll keep watching for signs of spring with my dogs leading the search. Until the garden begins to grow, I'll add some colorful foods to my plate and enjoy the promise of the season ahead. This recipe has a variety of eye-healthy nutrients.

Spinach-stuffed Potatoes

- 1 (10-ounce) package frozen spinach, thawed and drained
• 6 medium potatoes (russet or sweet potatoes)
• 1/4 cup green onion

- 1/3 cup red bell pepper
• 1/4 cup plain Greek yogurt
• 1/4 cup silken (soft) tofu
• 1/2 cup low-fat cheddar cheese, grated
• 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
• 1/2 teaspoon salt (optional)

Thaw the spinach and drain any extra water. Preheat the oven to 350 F. Wash and scrub the potatoes, then bake for 1 hour, or until tender and easily pierced with a fork. While the potatoes bake, wash and chop the green onion and bell pepper. In a mixing bowl, combine the yogurt, tofu, spinach, onion, bell pepper and cheese. When the potatoes are done, let them cool, then scoop out the insides with a spoon. Add the potato flesh to the yogurt mixture and stir until well combined. Spoon the filling back into the potato shells, sprinkle with seasoning and bake for 20-25 minutes, or until slightly browned. Add extra cheese on top, if desired.

Makes six servings. One serving has 345 calories, 2 grams (g) fat, 16 g protein, 68 g carbohydrate, 9 g fiber and 423 milligrams sodium.

(Julie Garden-Robinson, Ph.D., R.D., L.R.D., is a North Dakota State University Extension food and nutrition specialist and professor in the Department of Health, Nutrition and Exercise Sciences.)

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motorists were marooned in their cars overnight. In Grand Forks, at least eleven people were still listed as missing two days after the storm. Near Fort Ransom, a father and son froze to death while out walking. Two cousins near Hannah died while walking home from a 4H Club meeting.

The Weiner family, from near Langdon, had just arrived at their farm home when the storm broke. Their driveway was blocked, so they parked along the highway, but upon opening the car door, the oldest daughter was swept away by the wind. By the time her parents caught up with her, they were all lost. They did eventually bump into a fence post that Mr. Weiner recognized as his own. He left his family behind and followed the fence to his sheep shed. He returned, but his wife was unable to move, so he took his daughter and young son to the shed, then returned once more and half-dragged, half-carried his wife to safety.

Four brothers from near Dazey, aged seventeen and younger, had

been out roller skating, and on the way home were caught in the storm. Donald, Lee and Dickie perished. Only "Bobbie" Taylor survived—and only because his twin brother Dickie had been holding him in the snowdrift in which they had sought shelter.

Bobbie was in the hospital for a while. He lost his left foot and the toes and heel of his right foot. However, he kept a good attitude, telling his nurse, "I don't think I will be able to play football because of my feet, but I think I will make it alright in basketball."

The reports of the Taylor family tragedy spread far and wide, and Bobbie unexpectedly received an autographed photo from movie star Robert Taylor—written on the photo was "To Robert Taylor from Robert Taylor. Best wishes."

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Spuds' Day of Firsts

By Merry Helm

March 26, 2026 – It was a day of firsts across the river in Moorhead, Minnesota. As reported on this date in 1928, Moorhead High had won its first major sports title by taking the 16th Annual Minne-

sota high school basketball championship. They beat a Minneapolis team, the Edison Inventors, before a record-breaking crowd of 7,200 spectators in the U of M Fieldhouse.

A reporter wrote, "In the championship game, Edison's vaunted passing play, which baffled Northfield Friday, was no puzzle to the Moorhead Spudders after they got going in the second quarter."

Moorhead, which has made frequent appearances in the state tournament as representatives of their section, used a cautious slow approach in invading the Edison's territory, but once past the middle of the floor, they uncorked clever passes and some accurate shooting that brought them into favor with a majority of the rooters that were from outside the home city of the Inventors."

Moorhead fans showed up in droves to welcome home their young heroes. Newspapers reported, "From the moment Clifford Halmrast, doughty captain and all-state forward, alighted from the train bearing the championship trophy, until a monster mass meeting was called to order in the high school auditorium, the cheers of the rooters, the blare of the bands, and the shrill cries of the [factory] whistles and [fire] sirens predominated. The victorious players and their coach, Glenn Hanna, were loaded on a fire truck with prominent city officials and were paraded through the main streets of the city."

Halmrast scored 20 points – the most in any championship round between 1922 and 1944. Both he and guard Earl Moran were selected by newspapermen and officials for the Minnesota all-state team. Moran didn't know it at the time, but he was way to becoming the first player to make all-state three times.

The Spuds won the state final again the following year - the first team in Minnesota history to win back-to-back championships. They hoped to make it three in a row the following year, but one of their players, all-state forward Pat Hilde, had just turned 20, making him ineligible.

Moran and teammate Carroll "Shorty" Malvey were the only Minnesota players to get to three state finals prior to 1971. After graduating, Pat Hilde, Earl Moran and Shorty Malvey enrolled at Concordia, in Moorhead, where they continued to make basketball history by leading that college to its first Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference Title. All three teammates made all-state again – this time at college level.

By the way, the final score in that first state championship game played by Moorhead in 1928 was pretty low by today's standard: The Spuds, 29. The Edison Inventors, 16!

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Pig Lady of Hollywood

By Sarah Walker

March 27, 2026 – Edith Hughes

was a big city, little city girl. She was born as Edith Wakeman in New York state, but she was raised in Bismarck. When she was older, in 1930, she took her parents to California, and they made their home in Los Angeles. Until 1941, she made it her custom to visit her home city at least once a year.

In the early 1940s, however, Edith began to lose her sight. One Easter Sunday before World War II began, she described her worsening vision as the way the stage looks "when they lower a gauze curtain between the scene and the audience." Her condition grew worse, and all the doctors she went to disagreed on a solution.

But she was a go-getter, and after Pearl Harbor, she reported to a volunteer agency to offer her services. Sightless or not, she was determined to help as best she could. She proposed collecting small donations from people. The director of the agency did not go for the idea, but Edith persisted on her own. Her charitable efforts focused on the issue of blindness, in hopes that the war would improve medical knowledge in that area. Later, she said, "I humiliated everybody by starting a penny a day campaign." She chose the slogan, "A penny a day drives the darkness away."

Her vision continued to worsen, but she turned her energy to other worthwhile causes. Soon, she began circulating Mexican piggy banks to collect funds for the Braille Institute. But she wanted a better design, so she bought a live pig (for ten dollars) and commissioned a sculpture of a life-size pig seated on a pedestal, its front hooves folded in a porcelain plea for funds. She christened this statue "Aurora, goddess of dawn and foe of darkness." This new, large piggy bank was placed in the Los Angeles Farmers' Market, to make its plea to the thousands of people who passed through the gates daily.

She was known as "the pig lady of Hollywood," and for good reason; she pushed people to donate their pennies to her piggy banks.

On this date in 1950, it was reported that Edith Wakeman Hughes was blind no longer. She had undergone surgery by a San Francisco surgeon who restored her sight. She could now see!

Nonetheless, even in its absence, her blindness inspired her, and she continued to push forward and even increase her efforts. This "pig lady" was a business woman and a humanitarian, a go-getter and an inspiration.

"Dakota Datebook" is a radio series from Prairie Public in partnership with the State Historical Society of North Dakota and with funding from the North Dakota Humanities Council. See all the Dakota Datebooks at prairiepublic.org, subscribe to the "Dakota Datebook" podcast, or buy the Dakota Datebook book at shop-prairiepublic.org.

Rolla woman and Belcourt man plead not guilty to Grand Forks County fentanyl charge

Court documents say Justin Charles Morin and Kristen Jean Allery Bruce were observed at a rest stop engaging in what appeared to be a drug deal.

GRAND FORKS — A Rolla woman and Belcourt man waived their Monday, March 16, preliminary hearings and pleaded not guilty to a fentanyl charge that arose from a suspected drug deal observed in Grand Forks County.

Kristen Jean Allery Bruce, 25, is charged with Class A felony possession of at least 10 grams of fentanyl analog with intent to deliver and Class C felony tampering with evidence. Justin Charles Morin, 24, faces the same Class A felony charge, which has a maximum 20-year sentence.

On the afternoon of Feb. 3, a trooper observed two vehicles enter a rest area off of U.S. Highway 2, with people from each car walking to a trash can and back to their vehicles, according to a declaration of probable cause filed in the case.

The trooper suspected this was a drug deal, and pulled over the vehicle driven by Morin, who did not have an active driver's license, the declaration said.

Morin allegedly denied knowing the people from the other car, and said he stopped at the rest stop to use the bathroom.

Bruce, the passenger, allegedly attempted to conceal the drugs, but law enforcement located two bags of fentanyl on her as well as a "tooter," which is a tube used to ingest drugs, the declaration said. An additional 10 tooters were allegedly found in the vehicle.

The fentanyl weighed 28.5 grams, according to the declaration.

Bruce allegedly admitted to obtaining the drugs at the rest stop, and said she and Morin were given the drugs with the expectation that they would repay the dealers over time. Conversely, Morin admitted to buying the fentanyl for \$6,000, the declaration said.

They both denied selling the drugs, instead saying the fentanyl was for personal use, according to the declaration.

They were arrested but have both since been released on bond. Their next court hearings, final dispositional conferences, are scheduled for 1:30 p.m. June 11.

A final dispositional conference is considered a defendant's last opportunity to plead guilty in exchange for a plea agreement, proposed by the defense and prosecution, to be accepted by the judge.

A plea given after that hearing would be considered an open plea, with a sentence determined by the judge.

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