

Dakota Gardener: Only constant is change (and powdery mildew)

BY EMILY HOW
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While cleaning out a cabinet at my house, I stumbled across an old newspaper from the 1990s. I love finding things like this because it shows a glimpse of what was happening in the community at the time. As I paged through this paper, I found a Hortiscope column written by Ronald Smith, a former NDSU horticulturist. Seeing the contrast between then and now is one of the most interesting things about looking back at those old columns.

In the early 1990s, a submitted question like “I sent you this leaf with weird dots -- what is it?” would be a one-on-one diagnostic. The value lives entirely with the person who mailed in the leaf. Without a photo archive, searchable database or instant image sharing, that exchange could not easily help anyone else who was facing similar problems. Today, that same interaction would look completely different. A single photo could be shared online, tagged and reused by thousands of gardeners dealing with identical symptoms. What used to be a private answer has become a public, reusable reference.

By contrast, questions like “How do I get rid of creeping jenny in my tree row?” have aged much better. The question describes a recurring problem rather than a single mystery leaf. The answer depends on things that still matter now -- the tree species, the age of the planting, soil disturbance, herbicide tolerance, mulch, mowing and how much labor someone can invest. Those kinds of questions do not go stale because they’re really about management decisions, not just identification.

All of this led me down a rabbit trail, wondering what other kinds of horticulture questions were published in the past and what advice was given. The way we seek answers has changed, and we see that gardening practices have also changed



Treatment for powdery mildew is the same as it has been for decades. (Pixabay photo)

over time. New research and technologies change the advice offered. This can include something as basic as innovations in water practices, like drip irrigation, or something more complex, like soil sciences and no-till practices.

While meandering down the rabbit trail, I also discovered that some changes come out of pure necessity. In the '90s, green ash was a recommended tree variety in North Dakota as an excellent replacement tree for the elm trees plagued by Dutch elm disease. Today, neither of these trees is recommended because they’re linked to the spread of a serious disease and invasive insects, respectively.

Practices also change due to new varieties being introduced into the market. Tomato varieties, for instance, change frequently. Advancements in disease research have led to more resistance, so varieties like the Big Beef Plus tomato is resistant to 10 different diseases, whereas the popular '90s tomato variety Fantastic is only resistant to three diseases. With these advancements, gardeners will often have better yields, fewer diseases and hopefully less need for pesticides, which is an all-around win, saving gardeners both time and money.

Some things never change, though. Take powdery mildew, for example. It is handled in the same way now as it was in the '90s. Also, the likelihood of someone over- or under-watering a houseplant is the same now as it was back then. Most (and best) of all, the connections we make with others through gardening remain constant.

Nelson, Griggs tobacco retailers are in compliance

Nelson and Griggs counties had a 100% pass rate during a recent Synar Survey inspection conducted by the ND Department of Health and Human Services.

The purpose of the Synar Survey is to randomly survey licensed tobacco retailers across North Dakota to check compliance with laws that prohibit the sale of tobacco products to minors. The Synar Survey is a federal requirement conducted in all 50 states for the past 29 years.

Last summer, youth surveys conducted compliance checks across the state. North Dakota’s overall violation rate was 8.6%. Last year, North Dakota’s violation rate was 14.4%. States that have a violation rate of 20% or greater risk losing

a portion of their Substance Abuse Prevention and Control grant funding.

Of the 13 tobacco retailers in both counties, six were randomly picked and surveyed. The six tobacco retailers that were inspected and passed were: Miller’s Fresh Foods in Cooperstown, Northern Plains Petroleum in Hannaford, Farmers Union Oil in Lakota, Farmers Union Oil in McVile, Michigan Hometown Foods in Michigan and Hamster Oil in Michigan.

Nelson-Griggs District Health Unit congratulated these businesses for passing the survey and keeping tobacco out of the hands of youth.

For more information, visit <https://www.hhs.nd.gov/events/public-notice-ffy-2026-annual-synar-report>.

Weather report

MICHIGAN

Reports from the NDSU ND Agricultural Weather Network station at Michigan for the 24-hour period each day.

Date	High	Low	Rain
Jan. 19	-1	-14	
Jan. 20	9	-12	
Jan. 21	14	-2	.04
Jan. 22	-2	-25	
Jan. 23	-14	-26	
Jan. 24	-2	-18	.01
Jan. 25	-11	-29	

Weather report

PEKIN

Reports from the NDSU ND Agricultural Weather Network station at Pekin for the 24-hour period each day.

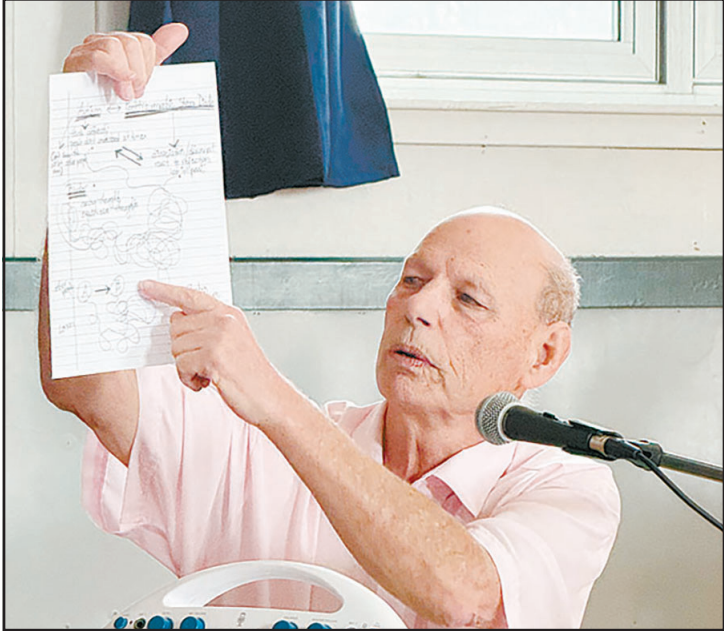
Date	High	Low	Rain
Jan. 19	1	-12	
Jan. 20	10	-11	
Jan. 21	17	0	.03
Jan. 22	0	-23	
Jan. 23	-13	-24	
Jan. 24	-1	-17	
Jan. 25	-11	-25	

McVile Community Library

Hours: T-F 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.; Sat. 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
701-322-5541



Tasty Tuesday activity



Loren Isaacson



BY RITA LOIBL

“Love You to Pieces” was the Valentine activity Mary Gleason shared with us at Tasty Tuesday. On a cold winter day we gathered around the “big” table in the library to create our own jigsaw puzzle hearts (pictured with this article). We were warm and cozy as we enjoyed munching on cream puff treats, socializing, and creating the festive Valentine. The next Tasty Tuesday will be on February 17, hosted by Marilyn Dehne. Please join us. It is a great way to chase away the winter “blahs.”

The McVile Community Library hosted another in its series of Community Library Enrichment Programs which allow us to bring interesting and informative presentations to our patrons. On Saturday, Jan. 24, Loren Isaacson shared life through his eyes while dealing with autism, PTSD and brain injury, and some associated conditions such as flashbacks, dissociation and confusion. His positive attitude toward life in spite of his disabilities is remarkable. He said, “I declare my life to be essentially a good one. However, the mental illness throughout created a mystery that took me years to discover. In the throes of mental anguish, grief, abandonment and depression, I finally felt the pangs of a new personality as a saving touch to my life.” Isaacson’s memoir, *Will He Survive*, describes life as he lives it and is told with both humor and tragedy. Isaacson encourages us to read by saying, “Take the dip and experience the trek into a life with the unknown and the unpredictable.” The library is truly happy that Loren Isaacson shared his life experiences and donated the royalties from the sale of his books to the library to help them continue the enrichment program. The library also acknowledges the public who came from their cozy homes out into the cold to hear this enlightening presentation.

What’s next

Kids’ Reading Roundup: Saturday, Feb. 14, library (1 to 2:30 p.m.)
Tasty Tuesday: February 17 during library hours (10 a.m. to 2 p.m.) ,Marilyn serving

New releases!

The Quiet Librarian by Allen Eskens (adult historical fiction)
Family of Spies by Christine Kuehn (adult nonfiction)
Don’t Trust Fish by Neil Sharpson (children’s fiction)
New to the library
The Memory Box by Kathryn Hughes (adult historical fiction)
Night Road: A Novel by Kristin Hannah (adult fiction)
Heidi by Johanna Spyri (juvenile fiction)
All the Living and the Dead by Hayley Campbell (adult nonfiction)
Great Short Books by Kenneth C. Davis (adult nonfiction)
Inciting Joy by Ross Gay (adult nonfiction)

The Nelson County
CALENDAR
OF EVENTS



- Feb. 5: Giving Hearts Day Fundraiser Meal, GSS-Lakota, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
- Feb. 14: Kids’ Reading Roundup, McVile Community Library
- Feb. 14: Meal and Music Fundraiser for RWM, Sundahl Lutheran Church, Aneta, 5 p.m.
- Feb. 17: Tasty Tuesday, McVile Comm. Library, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Brought to
you by the
State Bank
of Lakota



Monthly webinars to
focus on aging well

NDSU Extension and South Dakota State University Extension are hosting a three-part webinar series designed to help older adults, families and professionals navigate key issues in aging. These workshops are offered as live Zoom webinars.

There will be presentations on three Wednesdays: February 18, March 18 and April 15. All presentations start at 10 a.m. They are free to attend, and participants can sign up as an individual viewer or as a watch party host and invite a group to participate.

Ideal watch party hosts include Extension county offices, senior centers, libraries and community centers. The webinars are archived for later viewing, but participating in the live webinar allows participants to interact with the presenter.

“Aging well is about being proactive, and this webinar series reflects feedback from the community on topics that matter most while offering timely information that supports health and well-being,” says Philip Estep, NDSU Extension gerontology specialist in Fargo.

On February 18, Estep will kick off the 2026 aging well series by presenting “Navigating Family Estrangement in Older Adulthood.” This webinar will explore what family estrangement is, why it happens, its impact on emotional health and caregiving, and ways to offer support and strengthen community connections for adults.

On March 18, Teri Undem will present “Polypharmacy and De-prescribing: Manag-



ing Medications for Health and Safety as We Age.” This webinar offers an overview of polypharmacy, the risks of taking multiple medications and how planned de-prescribing can improve safety and quality of life for older adults. Undem is the director of Advanced Pharmacy Practice Experiences and a faculty member in the School of Pharmacy within NDSU’s College of Health and Human Sciences.

For the final presentation on April 15, Bobbi Thury will present “Beyond the Will: The Decisions, Documents and People that Shape Your Estate Plan.” This webinar explains key estate planning documents and decision-makers, clarifies fiduciary roles and offers strategies to avoid common mistakes and protect assets. Thury is an attorney at law who practices in Sioux Falls, SD.

Register as either an individual or a watch party host at ndsu.ag/aging-well-26.

For more information about this workshop or hosting a watch party, contact Estep at 701-231-6003 or philip.estep@ndsu.edu.

ND tax commissioner has
guidance on filing this year

Tax Commissioner Brian Kroshus has announced that the 2026 individual income tax season began January 26, coinciding with the date that the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) will begin to accept and process returns.

In 2025 the ND Office of State Tax Commissioner processed just over 480,000 North Dakota individual income tax returns. The due date to file and pay 2025 individual income tax returns this year is Wednesday, April 15.

“As in past years, North Dakota will once again align its filing season with the IRS schedule,” said Kroshus. “If filers haven’t already done so, I encourage them to begin gathering and organizing their necessary documents well in advance of the deadline to ensure a smooth filing process.”

Filers should also be aware of recent changes in US Postal Service (USPS) postmark date processes. Effective January 1, the postmark date is now the day the mail was processed by USPS rather than when it was dropped off in the mailbox.

To minimize delays in receipt of paper returns, filing electronically is recommended.

“We encourage taxpayers to e-file as it is the fastest, most secure method and improves ac-

curacy and efficiency, and helps counter potential delays related to new postal procedures,” said Kroshus. “This past year, almost 94 percent of North Dakota income tax filers chose to submit their returns electronically, a number that continues to grow.”

Additional tax filing tips include:

- If requesting a filing extension, do so before the April 15 deadline and include any estimated payments (for those who anticipate tax due) to ensure tax is paid prior to deadline.

- Request a receipt from the US Postal Service for mailed returns, especially in proximity to the filing deadline of April 15.

Taxpayers may also take advantage of free tax preparation sites available throughout North Dakota. These sites, operated by the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) and the IRS, provide free tax preparation sites throughout North Dakota, with most locations opening in February. Details, including site locations and appointment scheduling information, will soon be available at www.tax.nd.gov/freetaxprep.

In addition to the various options listed above, taxpayers may also choose to file electronically by purchasing tax preparation software or by working with a qualified tax professional.

Once filed, taxpayers can utilize the “Where’s My Refund?” tool found at www.tax.nd.gov/refund to track the status of their state refund.

For additional details on North Dakota tax-related programs, please visit the Office of State Tax Commissioner’s website at www.tax.nd.gov or connect with us on social media.

Donations for
Lakota Cemetery

Those wishing to make donations to help with upkeep and general maintenance at the Lakota Cemetery are asked to send them to: Lakota Cemetery, PO Box 54, Lakota, ND 58344.

Donations for
Pecka Cemetery

Those wishing to make donations to help with the cost of general maintenance and upkeep of the cemetery are asked to send them to: Pecka Cemetery Fund, Inc., c/o Robert Kubat, 120 Regina Ave. S., Park River, ND 58270-4404.

Fancy Dining with Chef Adjari

Herlof Huso in Concert

Adult Plate \$20
Child Plate \$15
RSVP

Fundraiser for Red Willow Ministries

Menu
Chicken Breast/Marsala Sauce
Twice Baked Potato
Glazed Carrot, Bread
Dessert, Beverage

Valentine’s Day Meal and Music
Sundahl Lutheran Church, Aneta, ND
Saturday, February 14th, 2026
5:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m.
Come for food, stay for music!
RSVP by Feb. 1st
Contact Joan at 701-371-0303

Supported by Thrivent



GIVING
HEARTS
DAY

GSS - Lakota is Raising Funds for
GIVING HEARTS DAY 2026!

Thursday, Feb. 5th

11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Serving **SPAGHETTI,
SIDE SALAD & A COOKIE**

MEAL FOR
DELIVERY OR
PICK UP!

A SMALL
ASSORTMENT OF
FLOWERS FOR
\$15
Candy Grams also available
for free will offering



Place flower orders for
residents or staff by
Thursday, Feb. 5th
for delivery on
the 12th



CALL (701) 247-2902 TO PLACE YOUR ORDER TODAY!

\$10/meal as a suggestion OR free will offering

Will travel the entirety of
northern Nelson County.

All proceeds will go towards
completing the flooring in resident rooms