

FEBRUARY 2024 @ PPI



OUR MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

OUR LOCAL SEED SAVERS ARE HELPING TO BUILD FOOD RESILIENCE IN LIVINGSTON AND BEYOND!



We saw a lot of new faces at our 10th annual Seed Extravaganza in January including 4 children!

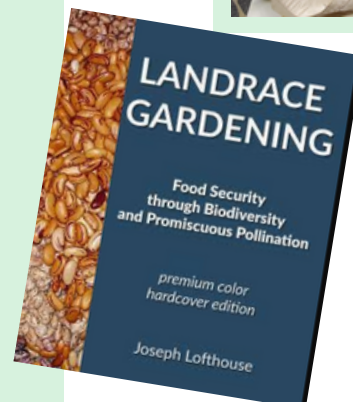
Whitney Pratt from Land to Hand Montana was our speaker. She mentioned "we are seeing changes in weather, pests etc... and having our own regional seeds can make us more adaptive to challenges... Over the last 100 years we have lost over 96% of seed biodiversity with that focus on (growing) specific varieties. We used to have huge biodiversity in seed, variety is really significantly declining and it's really up to local communities to make sure to save seed varieties if we want to preserve them."

Her presentation was too good to miss so we will be posting it on our website under videos later this month.

According to Joseph Lofthouse author of Landrace Gardening, we can use this no-stress method of joyful food security by bringing back food diversity to deal with the changing times.



**Articles, 2024 Events
& More...**





Have a Comforting Cup of Winter Tea

from Annalisa Pedraza



Seasonal depression is a challenge that many face. Winter doesn't slow our pace down nor decrease our responsibilities. **Fortunately, we can grow powerful herbs that enhance our mood while supporting gut/brain health right in our own yards and gardens.**

The following herbs are easy to cultivate and self-spreading. Instead of worrying about invasiveness, I simply harvest often. When I have taken as much as I can fresh and dried the rest, I let it flower to feed pollinators, or use as green manure. You can drop the fresh green cuttings onto the bed or food forest floor, or add it to compost, or extract for a compost tea. Volunteers are easily pulled when young.



Lemon Balm: this bright herb is easily preserved so that we can enjoy the flavors of summer in winter tea blends.

Lemonbalm is an aromatic, relaxing nervine. It is traditionally used in herbal medicine for anxiety, nervousness, nervous digestion, stress, insomnia and depression. Digestion wise, Lemon Balm relieves stagnant digestion, eases abdominal cramping, and promotes healthy digestion.

Motherwort: This bitter herb is so powerful. It definitely has presence in the garden, so pull early from where you don't want it! It too is used to support the heart and blood pressure when anxiety causes our heart to flutter, pound, or race. Blended with other tasty tea leaves, the heart is supported to go back to normal rhythms, while we experience the relaxing of the emotional heart at the same time! Motherwort is calming but not overly sedating. The bitter action of Motherwort also stimulates bile, which not only helps us digest fats, but remove toxins from our bodies.



Continued below 



Chamomile: Easy to grow, collect and air dry, the flowers make a tea for when energy is pent up in irritability, restlessness, insomnia and crankiness. Chamomile tea is gentle enough for infants, and helps relieve gas, indigestion and trouble digesting food.

Basil, Sweet and Tulsi: Feeling tired AND wired? Basil is fabulous for relaxing the nerves while uplifting the mood. Basil helps the body adapt to stress, which is how it can do double duty as something to calm the nervous system while lifting mood and increasing alertness. I confess to not having success with growing it in a pot in my house, but others do. It can be dried for teas, or frozen for eating later.



Lavender: Just the aromatics of Lavender is soothing to the soul. It has been clinically observed that agitation due to dementia has been relieved. If we are struggling with stagnant depression that will not lift, Lavender combined with lemon balm, either in tea or tincture form, helps to lift the fog and process the trauma that may have contributed to the long term depression. Added to bitters blends, it helps move digestion and keeps the gut environment inhospitable to disease causing microbes, due to the antimicrobial properties.

Valerian: the entire plant can be used in teas and decoctions for insomnia, muscle tension, anxiety, and poor digestion. This sedating plant is very relaxing, and when combined with other relaxing herbs, is powerful enough to rival OTC drugs.



GARDEN CLIMATE

From Michele's Mountaintop

January is seed cleaning/garden planning time here. At 7300' I sort seeds and create my planting calendar. **In a cold and dry climate the priority is to ensure enough moisture and warmth.** Looking out the window to the big coolie west of the house I see that unless things change I will have a dry summer. It is usually 50' deep by now and there is only 6" of snow there now.

There are things I can do to alleviate drought. Getting moisture into the plants and keeping them from losing it requires watchfulness and strategy. Soil life is likely to be limited by both cold and drought. Inoculating with beneficial fungi and bacteria will help, but you must provide soil organisms with food (compost, mulch) and water to create a diverse and productive soil community. Compost tea contains it all. The life in the soil will feed your plants.

Earthen walls, swales, even little furrows, bands of mulch, or buried wood-can harvest water and create warmer micro-climates to transform a dry barren spot.

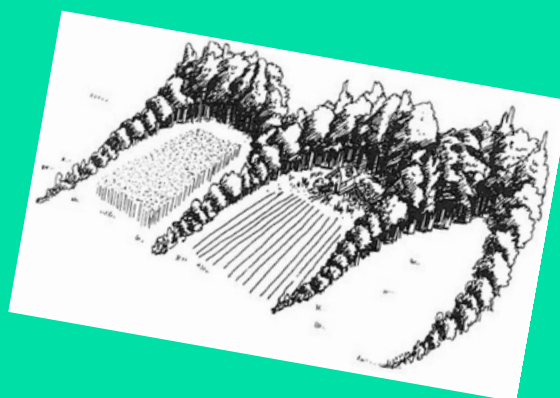
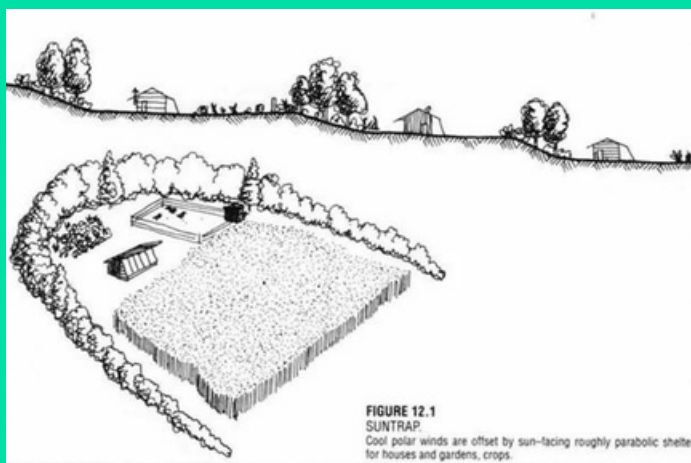
Most cold and dry places are in the mountains, and have short growing seasons. Plant shelters and protection like cold frames, hoop houses, and row covers really come into their own here. Short-season varieties are key, also mulch can retain heat at the end of a warm spell, but if the soil hasn't warmed up, mulch can shade it too much.

Shelter from wind is critical. Hedges, walls, buildings and temporary barriers (even cardboard) prevent wind chill for your plants just as they do for you. **Create sun traps (see diagram, can be made smaller for any size space) open to the sun in the south but enclosed on 3 sides to trap heat.** Rock or water barrels can store heat in the day to radiate at night. Terraces and walls can create a micro-climate like moving to another climate zone.

Lots to think about and many things that can be built now to ensure a successful harvest.

Happy garden dreams, Michele

P.S. Check out the Siberian, short season, cold tolerant varieties at seedstrust.com.



Michele Evans
PPI Board Member

Valley G'rls Chicken Journal

BY: Joy Larsen



VALLEY G'RLS EGGS

KEEPING CHICKENS WARM IN WINTER WITHOUT A HEAT SOURCE

Hi All!! Some of us chicken owners cannot logistically use an auxiliary electric source of heat to our coop.... Me included.... I use a "deep Litter" method for the bedding to promote warmth.

Bedding material is added daily, which adds up to a thick accumulation and generates heat.....safely! and insulates the coop! Clean out is in the Spring.

Basically a compost pile inside the coop, all natural!!

Research shows that composting produces both heat and beneficial microbes important to FLOCK health.

THX for following my journal!





2024 EVENTS CALENDAR

Feb 17: Seed Starting, Personalized to Your Needs, Instructor Mona Lewis, PPI Demonstration Site, Charts, Maps, Planning Maps, Equipment, and Planting Methods, plus try your hand at making soil cubes 10:30 to 12pm, \$20

Feb 24: Free Movie Kiss the Ground, Park Co Livingston Library, 2- 4pm with plant based appetizers

Mar 13: Free Permaculture Presentation, Mona Lewis Livingston Library 6:30-7:30pm

Mar 27: Composting Panel, Livingston Library 6:00 to 7:45pm Nate Brown, Kathryn Dunlap, Michele Evans, Ryan Green, and Annalisa Pedraza

Apr 6: Compost Workshop with Annalisa Pedraza, PPI Demonstration site, 10 am to 12pm

Apr 17: Permaculture Class (what is Permaculture and how these principles increase yields & plant health in the garden, plus create your own Backyard Garden Design) Mona Lewis, 6:30pm to 9pm, \$45

Apr 20: Regenerative Agriculture Workshop building swales for linear food forests, moving water on the land for irrigation & creating sustainable edible ecosystems.

May: Starting a Garden and how to improve what you have, Meghan McCarthy

Jun: Volunteer Day Transplanting June 1 drop-in 9am to 12pm

****Watch for us at the Farmers Market through June and into September****