



# TWINTOWNS GARDENERS' MARKET

## WAHPETON, ND / BRECKENRIDGE, MN

### Straw Bale Gardens

Last year I had a chance to hear Joel Karsten speak on his method for growing plants in straw bales. Karsten has written a book, *Straw Bale Gardens*, in which he explains the process.

Straw, not hay, bales are used as containers for vegetables, root-crops, herbs and flowers. Bales are positioned end-to-end with "cut" sides up.

The bales are conditioned with high nitrogen fertilizer, followed by 10-10-10 fertilizer, and water on a schedule explained in the book. This regimen causes decaying, which creates heat in the straw bales.

The decaying of the straw turns the inside of the bale into a nitrogen rich growing medium. The bottom heat promotes rapid root growth.

Other advantages to this method of planting are the raised height allows better access to plants, no weeding, and straw holds moisture well.

As I listened to Karsten's presentation, I thought about tomato plants. My thought was that if the tomatoes were grown above ground level, they would be less likely to develop diseases. I decided to conduct an experiment.

I purchased two Early Girl determinate tomato plants. On Memorial Day weekend, I planted one in a conditioned straw bale and the other in the ground next to the straw bale. I placed landscaping fabric under the plant in the ground.

On July 20, the plant in the straw bale was 27 inches tall, the one in the ground was 38 inches tall.

The first ripe tomato came from the straw bale plant. However, I had many more tomatoes on the plant in the ground. And those tomatoes were larger in size.

I also found that the straw bale plant needed to be watered more often. I had two pepper plants in a container near the tomatoes, and these pepper plants needed less water than the straw bale tomato.

The landscape fabric did as good a job of preventing disease as the straw bale.

My conclusion is that planting tomatoes in the ground is preferable to them in straw bales.

If you would like more information about straw bale gardens go to Joel Karsten's web page: <http://strawbalegardens.com>.

By Penny Seifert

April 2013

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We're on the Web!  
[www.twintownsmarket.org](http://www.twintownsmarket.org)



### We're on Facebook

Be sure to go to our Facebook page to read the many interesting articles about food and healthy eating.

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# Workshops

## Richland County Extension Service

### Food Preservation / Gardening in Small Spaces

April/May (dates TBA)

Register by email to [debra.evenson@ndsu.edu](mailto:debra.evenson@ndsu.edu), or 701-642-7793

### M|State Sustainable Food Production

#### “Pork on Pasture” Workshop

Saturday, April 27, 2013

10:00 am - 2:30 pm

18618 County Road 23, Verndale, MN

Instructors: Kent and Linda Solberg

Cost: \$50/person or \$75/family

Bring a sack lunch, beverages provided

Class size limited to 12 people

For more information, call 218-445-7580

#### Holistic Management of Goats Workshop

Saturday, June 15, 2013

10:00 am - 4:00 p.m.

Instructors: Sue Wika and Tom Prieve

Paradox Farm, 11643 State Highway 78, Ashby, MN

Cost: \$50/person or \$75/family

Bring a sack lunch

Class size limited to 12 people

For more information contact Sue Wika at [paradoxhome-stead@gmail.com](mailto:paradoxhome-stead@gmail.com) or 218-747-2202

#### Introduction to Cheese Making

##### Session 1: Soft Cheeses

Friday, April 5, 2013, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m. and

Saturday, April 6, 2013, 10:00 am - noon

(Lodging available for \$30.00, call 218-864-5303)

##### Session 2: Pasta Filata (Mozzarella) and Salt Brined (Feta) Cheeses

Saturday, April 20, 2013, 10:00 am - 3:00 pm

Instructors: Sue Wika and Tom Prieve

Faith Haven Bible Camp, Eagle Lake, south of Battle Lake, MN

Cost: \$50/session or \$90/both sessions

Register by March 29, Class size limited to 10 people

For more information contact Sue Wika at [paradoxhome-stead@gmail.com](mailto:paradoxhome-stead@gmail.com) or 218-747-2202

# Sunshine

By Emmy Tolbert



Shine, Jesus, shine!



Beautiful sunset



Sun setting

# Garden Seminars

## West Otter Tail County Garden Day

Saturday, April 6, 2013  
Kennedy Secondary School, Fergus Falls, MN  
Registration: 8:00 am  
Cost: \$30.00, includes lunch, classes, and Garden Marketplace  
For more information: [www.extension.umn.edu/county/ottertail](http://www.extension.umn.edu/county/ottertail) (Under 'Hot Topics in OTC')

*Our very own Kairouan Moffet will present "Irises & Daylilies I Have Known and Loved" at 9:00 and 10:00 a.m.*

## Spring Gardening Workshop and Salad Supper

Thursday, April 11, 2013  
Breckenridge Elementary School Cafeteria  
5:15 pm: Registration and salad supper  
6-9:00 pm: Mini-workshops  
Cost: \$15.00 by April 1, \$20.00 after April 1

Join beginner and experienced garden enthusiasts for mini-workshops featuring a variety of gardening topics.

Register online at [www.breckenridge.k12.mn.us](http://www.breckenridge.k12.mn.us). Follow Web Store/Community Education link to choose classes for Master-Card, Visa or Discover payment.

## Gardening Saturday, Northern Gardening for Northern Gardeners

Saturday, April 27, 2013  
Alerus Center, Grand Forks, ND  
8:00 a.m.—3:55 p.m.  
Cost: By April 22, \$40.00; after April 22, \$50.00  
No registrations at the door

For more information and online registration go to <http://tinyURL.com/gardeningsaturday>.

## Bergeson Nursery

4177 County Highway 1, Fertile, MN 218-945-9688  
[www.bergesonnursery.com](http://www.bergesonnursery.com)

*Seminars are held Thursday evenings at 7 pm and repeated the following Saturday at 9 am, 11 am, and 1 pm. Coffee and donuts will be served. No registration necessary. Seminars are free.*

## Growing Fruit in the North

April 4 and 6, 2013  
Enter the satisfying world of growing fruit in the north. From rhubarb, which won't grow anywhere but in cold climates, to apples, to strawberries, to elderberries — growing fruit can be a rewarding avocation. Planting and pruning tips included.

## Trees and Shrubs for Your Yard

April 11 and 13, 2013  
Basic yard plantings should consist of hardy, dependable trees and shrubs. Choose varieties that fill the bill. Basic planting, care, and design instructions will be included in the seminar.

## Perennials and Hardy Roses

April 18 and 20, 2013  
Check up on the latest perennials for your flowerbed, as well as the newest varieties of hardy, low-maintenance roses. Learn how to make your perennials and roses thrive with a minimum of effort.

## Growing Beautiful Annuals

April 25 and 27, 2013  
How to turn your yard into an explosion of color. The better your plants perform over the summer, the more you will enjoy them, and the more you'll plant. A handful of simple ideas can make a huge difference in the success of your garden. Learn about the newest annuals and our favorites.

## 2013 Spring Extravaganza — Unleash the Power of Age

Thursday, May 2  
11:02 a.m.—3:00 p.m.  
Wahpeton Eagles Club  
11:02-12:00 p.m. Registration and view exhibits  
12:00 p.m. Lunch  
12:30 p.m. Jason Weber, Richland County Sheriff's Office/  
Narcotic Agent—"Drugs 101"

Medication Management (bring all prescription and over-the-counter medication to review drug interaction)—Land of the Dancing Sky Area Agency on Aging with Lake Region Healthcare

Matter of Balance, Tai Chi — Bone Builders

Jill Breuer, Richland County Dispatch — Code Red Notification System

2:30 p.m. Door prizes

Coffee and Cookies sponsored by Winmar Sleep Wellness Center

*This event is sponsored by the Eagles Club, United Way,  
and 55+ Coalition*

# Send Us Your Photos

Kairouan Moffet (Mrs. Fancy Plants) recently spent time at Port Aransas, Texas. Port Aransas is located in the Gulf of Mexico north of Padre Island. Its population is about 3,500, except during spring break when the population increases to 100,000.

Send us your best snapshots of your garden, large or unusual produce, flowers, the sky, your vacation, or anything else you find interesting, and we'll publish the best shots as room allows.

Email your photos to [Penny.ttgm@gmail.com](mailto:Penny.ttgm@gmail.com). Please include your name, contact information, information about the picture, and where and when it was taken.



Kairouan purchased her bike, Golightly, from a pawn shop



Homemade sandcastle art



Pink hibiscus



Pink roses in bloom



Ship in the channel



Yours truly in front of a bank of verbena