

RCMG "Through the Seasons" Spring 2019

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Click on the pic to learn more about this early spring wildflower.

Zone 4 : A New Frost Date?



You've got your seed packets out for cool season crops : carrots, radishes, peas, beets, spinach, kale and lettuce and



other members of the [cole crop](#) family.

You've learned to follow the directions on the seed packet and plan to plant outdoors 4 to 6 weeks before the average last frost for cool season crops. For as long as you can remember, the last frost date in Minnesota is usually in mid May. What are the predictions for the average frost date in the future?

[READ MORE.](#)

Garlic Mustard, Food or Foe?

Garlic mustard, *Alliaria petiolata*, arrived in the United States in the early 1800s. It was planted in gardens as an edible herb.

Classified as a biennial, it usually appears as a rosette the first year and produces flowers and seeds the second year. Each individual plant can produce hundreds of seeds. It's also

is extremely adaptable to almost any habitat, and seed can lay dormant for up to 5 years, waiting for the right conditions to germinate. Many people find the flowers attractive and the taste of garlic delectable in a salad or made into pesto. All parts of the plant are edible.

The bad news, this herb has "escaped" out of our gardens and yards and has dominated our roadsides and woodlands, crowding out other native understory plants. It is now classified as a [noxious weed and invasive plant](#) in many states including Minnesota and Wisconsin.



The good news, it's relatively easy to identify and to pull up in the spring when the ground is fairly moist.

[WATCH A VIDEO](#) on how to identify garlic mustard from the University of Wisconsin Extension.

You can also attend a class on this and other invasive plants taught by Ramsey County Master Gardeners- see information below.

Get involved in a garlic mustard pulling event this spring, check out [Friends of the Mississippi River](#) and help pull weedy invasive plants.

 *Nature's Way of Recycling – rain barrels and compost bins!*

Why compost?

- Saves money on trash disposal
- Reduces waste created in yards and kitchens
- Converts leaves, grass and kitchen scraps into a usable soil amendment
- Reduces the need for additional fertilizers
- Finished compost makes good mulch for new plants

Backyard composting basics

1. Purchase a compost bin from RAM at www.rcydenminnesota.org
2. Recipe:
 - 2 parts greens: food scraps and grass (nitrogen-rich)
 - 3 parts browns: dry leaves (carbon-rich) and coarse materials like sticks or wood chips to create air space.
 - Water pile occasionally to keep it moist like a sponge.
 - *Do not add meat, fats, oils, dairy or pet droppings.
3. Turn frequently for a faster finish.

Time varies greatly from a few months to a year depending on conditions for your pile. Finished, mature compost should look, feel and smell like rich, dark soil and will be about 1/2 the original volume. You should not be able to recognize any items you put in. Compost that is not mature can damage plants, so try one of these easy tests to be sure compost is ready.

When can I use my compost?

The Sniff Test
Take a sample of compost and check for foul odors. They indicate anaerobic or airless decomposition is occurring, creating chemicals, which can be toxic to plants. As a rule, foul smelling compost should not be used.

The Bag Test
Take a small sample of compost from the inside of the pile, wet it thoroughly and seal the sample in a plastic bag and store the closed bag for about a week at room temperature. There should be no foul odors when you open the bag. If it should have a pleasant, earthy odor, if not, the composting process should be prolonged.



Annual Compost Bin and Rain Barrel Distribution

The [Recycling Association of Minnesota](#) hosts an annual distribution of compost bins and rain barrels to Ramsey County residents. You can pre-order them online and pick up at 2 locations this spring. The cost is \$64.00 for the compost bin and \$79.00 for the rain barrel + tax on both of these items.

Ramsey County Master Gardeners will be on hand at both distribution locations to give you some information on both how to compost in a bin and rain barrels.

Get started with these eco-friendly gardening habits to reduce organic waste and conserve water.

Pollinator Watch: Bumble Bees

Bumble Bees are such fun to observe as they ramble from flower to flower in your garden.

Here are [5 fun facts](#) about these important pollinators from the National Wildlife Federation. But, did you know that over a quarter of our North American Bumble Bees are at risk for some degree of extinction? Loss of habitat, use of pesticides, diseases and climate change are all implicated in the loss of these essential pollinators.

[READ MORE.](#)

Did you know, the [Rusty Patched Bumble Bee](#) could be named as the Minnesota State Bee?

Become a citizen scientist, you can help track Bumble Bee populations in your yard and garden! Visit <https://www.bumblebeewatch.org/> to learn how to take a photo and report your sighting.



Ramsey County Master Gardener Classes April- August 2019

Join us for some fun and interesting classes around the county on a wide range of topics.

Click on the links below to register, read more about each class and for specific locations and times. Taught by Ramsey County Master Gardeners, please come with your gardening questions!



Introductory Vegetable Gardening

6/01- [Roseville Public Library](#).

Planting for Pollinators

- 5/06 - [Fairview Community Center](#)
- 8/17 - [Ramsey County Barn](#)

Home Composting

- 6/11 - [Langford Park Recreation Center](#)

- 6/19 - [Ramsey County Barn](#)

Be a Garden Pest Detective (Integrated Pest Management for the Home Garden)

- 7/17 - [Ramsey County Barn](#)

"Herb-an Gardening" at Urban Growler

Sponsored by Ramsey County Parks and Recreation Langford Location

- 8/03 - [Urban Growler](#)



Invasive Weed Identification

7/13 - [North Dale Recreation Center](#)

Growing Fruit In Minnesota

A causal conversation about the best fruits to grow in Minnesota.

- 7/09 - White Bear Lake Public Library, [2150 2nd St, White Bear Lake, MN 55110](#) 6:30-7 pm. Drop in, no registration needed.

Growing Tomatoes

A casual conversation about growing tomatoes in MN and how to raise healthy plants.

- 6/11 - White Bear Lake Public Library, [2150 2nd St, White Bear Lake, MN 55110](#), 6:30-7 pm. Drop in, no registration needed.

Ramsey County Master Gardener Diagnostic Clinic Opens May 8, 2019!

Have a garden question? Need to identify a plant or house pest? **The Diagnostic Clinic, located at [2020 White Bear Ave. in Maplewood](#)**, is open to the public on

Wednesdays and Saturdays from the beginning of May until the end of September. The clinic is free of charge and available to you for the 2019 season.

Clinic Hours:

May: Wednesdays and Saturdays, 11 am to 1 pm.

June, July: Wednesdays, 11 am to 1 pm AND 6 pm to 8 pm AND Saturdays, 9 am to 1 pm.

August and September: Wednesdays and Saturdays, 11 am to 1 pm.

Please bring samples or good quality photos to the clinic to aid us in our diagnostic efforts. If we can't help you, we'll find a resource for you.



Save the Date, RCMG Annual Plant Sale!

Please mark your calendars for May 18, 2019 and plan to join us at our annual plant sale.


Location: [2020 White Bear Ave, Maplewood, MN 55109](#) at the historic Ramsey County



2019 PLANT SALE

Hosted by Ramsey County Master Gardeners
Saturday, May 18, 8 AM - 2 PM
The Barn 2020 White Bear Avenue Maplewood
Open to the Public

Hundreds of great plants, carefully tended by expert gardeners
Natives and perennials for sun and shade
tomatoes, hostas, seed trial winner seedlings, and more
Sales support community programs that engage youth in
horticulture projects and University of Minnesota scholarships.

 UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION

Barn.

Time: 8 am to 2 pm.

Come early, plants grown with such passion, love, and care by the Master Gardeners in Ramsey County go fast!



Earth Day History

Many of us note Earth Day on our calendars and often plan to help celebrate our home by attending [a local celebration or clean up event](#). Each year, we often make a new pledge to try to treat our environment with more respect and to be as green as we can be.

Did you ever wonder how the Earth Day movement started?

[READ MORE.](#)



Calendar: Community Events, Classes Near You and Information Booths.

[View our full calendar.](#)

Find us on 

Visit www.ramseymastergardeners.org for more information about our program!

University of Minnesota, U. of Minnesota Extension, 436 Coffey, 1420 Coffey Hall, St. Paul, MN 55108

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