

**2024 Dakota County Master Gardener Spring Expo: “Let’s Get Growing”  
Class Descriptions, Speaker Biographies and Speaker Photos  
Saturday, February 24, Rosemount Community Center**

**Keynote Speaker: Heidi Heiland –1:00 p.m. “The Future of Gardening:  
Environmental Trends Near and Far Collections”**

**Heidi Heiland**  
“The Future of  
Gardening”



With more than 40 years in the original green industry under her tool belt, **Heidi Heiland** has witnessed that water, food, and healing are central themes in Gardening. From her travels locally and abroad, Heidi will show you over the top opportunities as well as feasible methods to adopt sustainable practices in your own landscapes.

**Heidi Heiland** is the Chief Experience Officer for her Fine Gardening Company, “Heidi’s Lifestyle Gardens,” whose seeds were planted in 1979. Heidi and company rely on Mother Nature to create and nurture landscapes with ecological benefits that focus on water, food, and healing. In 2016, Heidi opened GrowHouse, a retail garden center on the five-acre footprint in Corcoran, Minnesota, with the intent of being a regenerative hub for growing, learning, and thriving.

Heidi graduated from the Constance Spry Flower School in England and is a certified professional through the Minnesota Nursery & Landscape Association. She holds a certificate in Horticultural Therapy and Permaculture Design.

**Morning Session I—9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. – Five Class Selections**

**Marissa Schuh**  
“Backyard Bugs:  
Friends or Foes?”



**Marissa Schuh’s** presentation, “Backyard Bugs: Friends or Foes?” will give a broad overview of the types of insects most often encountered in Minnesota backyards. Marissa will share ideas on how to figure out if the insects are helpful, just bystanders or pests.

**Marissa Schuh** is a horticulture Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Extension Educator with University of Minnesota Extension. In this role, she works with produce growers, horticulture professionals, and gardeners to troubleshoot issues, as well as develop relevant, timely educational content and programming. She has experience working with specialty crop growers on insect, disease, nutritional, weed, food safety, and regulatory issues. Marissa grew up in Minnesota, holds a master's degree in entomology from Michigan State University (MSU), and previously served as a vegetable extension educator with MSU Extension.

**Janet Poore and Sally McNamara**  
“Pruning Trees and Bushes in Dakota County”



**Janet Poore and Sally McNamara**, long time Dakota County Master Gardeners, will present, “Pruning Trees and Shrubs in Dakota County.” They have been pruning, and studying pruning for several years and will share the most important things they believe you should know about pruning trees and shrubs in your own home landscapes. Besides the basics of pruning in general (no stub ends please!), they have prepared a section of specifics relative to shrubs often found in Minnesota gardens.

Both **Janet Poore** and **Sally McNamara** have individually expended significant resources on a large variety of woody materials over their gardening years, which may mean they can give you a head start on maintaining yours. They have an excellent pruning article you can read before attending the class on our Dakota County website ([dakotamastergardeners.org](http://dakotamastergardeners.org)) titled “Lop and Lose.”

**Denise Haldorson**  
“Lilies to Love”

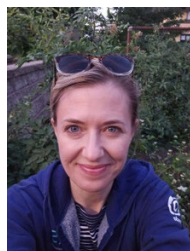


Ever wonder what makes the lily one of the most popular garden flowers? How to grow and care for them? Where to grow them? **Denise Haldorson**, with K&D Gardens, will present, “Lilies to Love.” Her presentation will provide a background on lilies, their divisions, growing needs, and planting tips. Have fun while learning how to add lilies to your garden that will provide stunning color and texture.

**Denise Haldorson** grew up in a family of lily lovers. In 2016 she and her husband Karl moved to Farmington, MN. They became active members in the North Star Lily Society and the Daylily Society of Minnesota. Denise serves on both Boards and is currently the President at North Star Lily Society. With their increased passion for lilies, in 2017 they began “learning the ropes” of owning a lily business. In 2019 they launched K&D Gardens with the vision of providing quality lily bulbs at affordable prices. Denise enjoys sharing her knowledge and enthusiasm for lilies. Make sure to stop by their vendor table and say hi even if you do not take her class!

**Jessica Aleman and Heidi Pence**

“Trials and Tribulations: A 2023 Time Lapse of the Dakota County/ South St. Paul Seed Trial Garden”



Through video, photos and narration, **Jessica Aleman and Heidi Pence** will give you a time-lapsed tour from planning to harvest (and everything in between) in the South St. Paul Trial Garden of Summer 2023. In the trial garden, flowers, vegetables, herbs, and fruit were all grown. Showcased will be the problems encountered and solutions found for rabbits, insects, and chemical drift damage. As part of the presentation, all garden questions will be answered.

**Jessica Aleman** is a new Dakota County Master Gardener who fell in love with gardening in her urban lot during the early days of the pandemic. She is especially interested in herbs and vegetables suited for Southern European cooking, and tough, flexible, drought-resistant perennials. Her current gardening focus is landscaping with edibles for wildlife and humans.

**Heidi Pence** has gardened organically for 40 years. She grows delicious and nutritious food for her family as well as fruit, herbs, and flowers. She is turning her small city lot into a tiny farm which will include bantam hens this spring. Her latest garden interest is growing roses.

**Andy Scott**

“Spring into Native Plants: Early Season Plants for a Pollinator Friendly Garden”



Tulips! Daffodils! Scilla! We all look forward to spring color, but are the plants we choose habitat friendly? In his presentation, “Spring into Native Plants,” **Andy Scott** will discuss some of the implications of traditional spring plant choices and highlight native plant alternatives for spring color and pollinator forage. Andy will also review recommended nature-safe annuals and how to choose pesticide-free plants.

**Andy Scott** started his small native garden landscape and design business ReWild Native Gardens, LLC in 2017. He has helped residents and commercial properties convert lawn and wasted space to wildlife-friendly gardens that support beneficial insects, birds, and other wildlife. Education driven, Andy prefers client involvement in the design and planning phases and encourages them to help with plantings as well. Andy holds a Design Degree from the Minneapolis College of Art & Design. He has over 10 years of hands-on experience in permaculture practices and native landscaping.

## Morning Session II--10:45 a.m.-11:45 a.m. – Five Class Selections

### **Courtney Tschida** “Seed Starting Basics”



In the class, “Seed Starting Basics,” **Courtney Tschida** will cover everything you need to know to start seeds for this spring: seed starting schedules, variety selection, options for containers and media, where and how to start seeds along with when and how to plant them outside. She will have a hands-on demonstration of making soil blocks, planting seeds, and potting up. Courtney will discuss materials, tools, and tricks for starting seeds. Bring seed starting questions and go home equipped with the “know how” to get started.

**Courtney Tschida** is the Program Manager for Dream of Wild Health. She has over 20 years of experience working in horticulture and food-systems education. Courtney spent 16 years at the University of Minnesota managing the Cornucopia Student Organic Farm, and 3 years at the Minnesota State Horticultural Society. She has experience in growing a wide variety of edible crops, in addition to planning and implementing gardens for schools, farms and food shelf gardens.

### **Peter Juhl** “Stone Sculpture in Your Garden”



In the class, “Stone Sculptures in Your Garden,” **Peter Juhl** will explain how to dazzle your friends with a new skill that looks like magic and combines elements of meditation, sculpture, and performance art. Create impossible looking balances using ordinary stones! Learn and practice simple techniques using shape, weight, and friction You'll leave grounded, refreshed, and able to repeat your balancing act in your own garden or anywhere with stone. For supplies/equipment, use an assortment of the instructor's practice rocks during class.

Applying elements of performance art, sculpture, and meditation, **Peter Juhl** balances natural stones to create compositions that evoke feelings of harmony and peace. His book [Center of Gravity: A Guide to the Practice of Rock Balancing](#) is the first widely available guidebook on this unique art form. He regularly speaks and teaches workshops at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum and other organizations around the region.

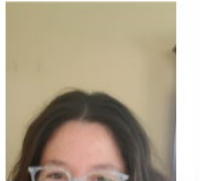
**Master Gardener  
Herb Panel:**

“Delicious Herbs to Enjoy in Your Favorite Dishes”

**Heidi Pence**



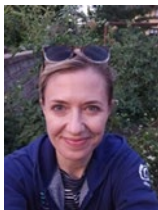
**Amy Delgado**



**Becky Peterson**



**Jessica Aleman**



**Lucy Poole**



The class, “Delicious Herbs to Enjoy in Your Favorite Dishes” will include basic introductory information on herbs, followed by eight highlighted herbs including parsley, dill, rosemary, basil, mint, thyme, garlic, and tarragon. Along with information on how to plant, harvest, use and store individual herbs, the panel will have the herb plants in pots available. They will provide an herb packet of information and recipes online.

The Panel includes: **Heidi Pence, Amy Delgado, Becky Peterson, Jessica Aleman, and Lucy Poole.**

**Heidi Pence** has gardened organically for 40 years. She grows delicious and nutritious food for her family as well as fruit, herbs, and flowers. She is turning her small city lot into a tiny farm which will include bantam hens this spring. Her latest garden interest is growing roses.

**Amy Delgado** has been a homeowner for eight years and has had fun learning to garden during this time. She enjoys planting and learning about native plants, perennials, vegetables and especially herbs.

**Becky Peterson** first started gardening with her Grandpa Andrew who loved green beans and dahlias. She really likes tomatoes and veggies, and she also is into perennials and pollinator-rich flowers throughout the growing season. She enjoys learning new things and cultivating the latest ideas.

**Jessica Aleman** is a new Dakota County Master Gardener who fell in love with gardening in her urban lot during the early days of the pandemic. She is especially interested in herbs and vegetables suited for Southern European cooking, and tough, flexible, drought-resistant perennials. Her current gardening focus is landscaping with edibles for wildlife and humans.

**Lucy Poole:** “Watching my mom enjoying her garden was my motivation to become a Master Gardener. I have been a Master Gardener for 11 great years, and still consider myself a beginner. I love learning something new about everything growing and being a MG gives me that opportunity. My favorite activity is working in the South Saint Paul Seed Trial Garden.”

**Sam Talbot**

“Get Growing with Natives: Hands on Opportunities and Resources in Dakota County”



The presentation, “Get Growing with Natives” by **Sam Talbot** includes advice on how to find volunteer opportunities to increase native plantings in Dakota County including seed collection, plant propagation, and native landscape stewardship. He will also share information on other pollinator organizations such as a Monarch Joint Venture.

For gardeners who want to start their own new native planting projects, Sam will share Dakota County funding opportunities to prepare and plan home landscapes, through the programs “Landscaping for Clean Water,” and “Lawns to Legumes.”

**Sam Talbot** is a local Extension Educator in Dakota County. In this role he manages the county’s plant propagation program to enhance native habitat restoration efforts and provides support for the Dakota County Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Program. He brings his experience and passion for finding science-based solutions to the challenges of growing plants, while engaging volunteers and stakeholders.

**Heidi Heiland**

“Container Gardening”



In “Container Gardening,” **Heidi Heiland** will share tips and tricks of container gardening, including design, preparation, and management. This presentation spans the four seasonal switch-out’s in containers: spring, summer, fall, and winter. She has even coined a fifth season! Attention is given to combinations of materials & unique products with primary focus on the main summer months. This colorful and fast paced power point highlights current container planting trends along with the latest and greatest flower combinations.

Keynote speaker **Heidi Heiland’s** background is in the Keynote Speaker description. Personal notes to add include that she is happily married, has three adult children, three grandchildren, a golden retriever named Dandelion and a recused cat named Clover.