



633 W Broadway
Gardner, MA
978-632-0991
February 1, 2023



Hours:
Monday to Friday:
8:30 am to 5:30 pm
Saturday:
8:30 am to 4:00 pm
Sunday:
closed

* please notice that our Thursday evening hours have changed.
We will close at 5:30 pm.



Well – winter has arrived with a vengeance. We knew it would. Nothing like back-to-back storms and an outdoor landscape that brings back sharp memories of the 2008 ice storm (at least where we are) to make one wish longingly for spring and summer. And now a cold snap is here for the next ten days or so...

Seed Catalogs

At this time of year, many of us like to curl up under a blanket with a cup of something hot and go through the myriad of seed catalogs that appear on our doorstep. We had a great time at the seed catalog coffee klatch last weekend prowling through all kinds of catalogs. As you browse your way through this hint of the coming spring and summer, here are some things to keep in mind:

If you're just getting started with gardening (welcome!) then start with only a few key kinds of seeds that are most important to you. And be prepared to buy seedlings if your first attempts don't grow strong starts. You'll get better as you get experience – guaranteed!

If you've been gardening for a while (congratulations!) then think about trying new varieties of the classics you count on. We're all very used to the cucumbers and peppers we find in the grocery store, but the vegetables actually come in a wide variety of cultivars – Peppers are bells, horns, sweet, spicy, hot, blisteringly hot. Cucumbers, lettuces, tomatoes, and eggplants, to name a few, all come in a wide variety of cultivars. The fun is trying something new. Our family has experimented with varieties for years and will have some of the seeds/plants/starts that we like the best at the store this season.

Browsing the seed catalogs is like hitting a candy store! And can have similar results of over indulgence... take the time to think through your goals, skills, and time allotted to caring for babies (because that's what seedlings are!). We are hosting a seedling class: Getting Seeds Started Right – on how to get those babies started right on Sat 2/25 1-2:30pm. \$30 includes pots, inoculant, seedling mix and one package of seed (your choice!). Limit 10 so register early...

Houseplants

Now on to a new offering at the store – HOUSEPLANTS!!! We've created a light rack on one of the walls of the store and have stocked it with an eclectic mix of plants. Some are classic tropical lower light plants and some are herbs (rosemary) and cyclamen (classic winter flowering plant). We even have the means to pot up your selection into a decorative pot of your choice. You'll see that we're using LED tube lights, drip trays with gravel for humidity control and even shower curtains (for now!) to help with night humidity. We heat the store with wood pellets – and the air is DRY!!!! Happy to walk you through the details, if that helps.

Houseplants can brighten up any space at this time of year and if you're looking for a different way to bring some into your home, **check out our workshop on Terrariums Sat 2/4 - 1-2:30pm - \$38**. This is an almost fool proof way to grow plants – mini greenhouses with total charm. We provide all the materials and plants. Class limit 10. Sign up early!

Bluebirds, Chickens, Chickadees Oh My!

And we'll finish this edition with BIRDS— of all kinds!

First up – our last newsletter mentioned sprouting grains for chickens...we now have a sprouting demonstration on-going at the front of the chicken aisle. Come in and check out how easy it is to set up a real treat for your chickens! And the improvement in the quality of eggs??? You'll just have to try it for yourself!

Next – we have meal worms in all sizes. Great for chickens of course but also useful for chickadees, cardinals, nuthatches, woodpeckers and the occasional bluebird or American Robin. Meal worms have lots of protein and fat and are excellent at boosting the health of the local flocks. Even better – the bluebirds will remember where they got the mealworms and be back during the spring to gobble lots of them to feed their young. Even robins will use the worms...

And finally – we have a couple of programs about birds

One for wild birds

We're starting with Backyard Birding, Attracting and Observing Birds in Your Yard presented by Dave Small, president of the 250 member Athol Bird and Nature Club. Dave has a wide-ranging interest in all aspects of our local ecological region and brings that passion to his presentation. He'll be fun to listen to on 2/11, 10:00-11:30am! \$15.00

And one for domestic birds – Ahhh!!!! Chickens!!! Fresh Eggs!!!

You've decided to grow your own chickens and get your own eggs. EXCELLENT! The price of eggs has sky rocketed (thanks to avian flu and changing migratory bird behavior due to drought in the middle of the country – heard about the Mississippi River?). The homesteader's dream most often starts with fresh home-grown eggs - and they can't be beat - but let's do it right! Nykki Clark loves working with her chickens and is happy to provide necessary details that you'll need to be successful with your new chicks. Chick order forms will be available for you to order chicks from the store. Nykki will be presenting Getting Started Right With Chickens on 2/11, 1:00-2:30pm. \$15.00.



Terrariums



Feb. 4, 2023
1 PM - 2:30 PM
\$38 per person

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Call the store! 978-632-0991

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